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Issue
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on the cover

This issue we feature on the cover: Lyzabeth Lopez
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Cover design by Leo Costa Leite

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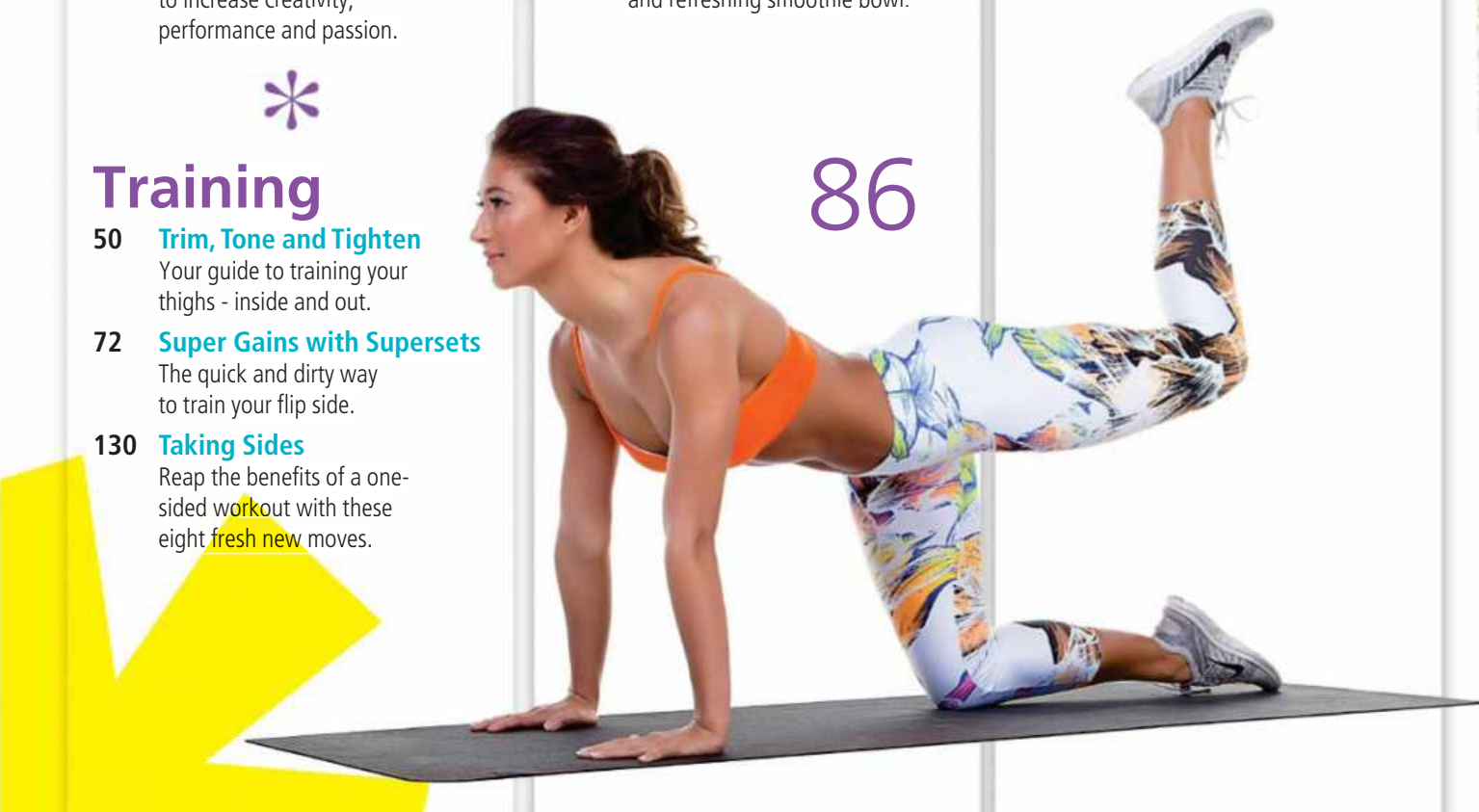
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Do you really want to be healthy and avoid the festive season blowout?

With the festive season already in full swing and the New Year just around the corner, don't forget to ask yourself "do I want to avoid another year of feeling overfull and unhealthy?" or am I happy to overindulge?

As a reader of *Oxygen*, chances are your answer is (most likely) that you want to avoid feeling average, overfull and unhealthy. If this is what you really want, it's important to remember that you want to be healthy first and foremost. If you remind yourself each day during the festive season (or perhaps multiple times a day) you'll be less likely to say yes to all the tempting treats and fall into a food coma for the rest of the day! Your health IS important, so make choices every day that will keep you feeling healthier. Now this doesn't mean that you can't enjoy the festive season and a few treats that end up on your plate, it just means that you are consciously making an effort to limit the sweet stuff and to choose healthier options wherever possible.

If you do this as frequently as possible, when January rolls around you'll be glowing with health, feeling happy and ready to take on 2016. But if you choose not to be healthy, you may beat yourself up over the choices you've made and suffer from the January blues. This tends to occur once the holiday season comes to an end and we stop being so carefree about what we do to our bodies. This is usually the point when we realise we need to get back on track. The easiest way to combat the January blues is to not get off track in the first place!

This is where it's helpful to remember that you actually WANT to be healthy.

To help you along the way, try to make a personal plan of what you'll do to keep your health in mind. It could include different ways to fit workouts into your schedule, what you'll say to relatives when they try to offer you unlimited food options for the 10th time that day or even mantras you will recite in your head when you feel you're about to head off track! A great one that I always use to remind myself of what is important to me is that "I'm making a choice, not a sacrifice."

Be sure to drink plenty of water and eat loads of fresh vegetables and fruit too. Remember that having a few indulgences is totally fine, and I couldn't recommend it more! But know the difference between an occasional indulgence and an all-out month-long binge.

Focus on your health and happiness and you'll be ready to take on 2016 and all the goals you have!

Over the festive season, remember to spend it with those you love and take time out for yourself! May your New Year also be blessed with health, wealth and happiness. From all of us here at *Oxygen* Magazine, we hope you have a wonderful time with your friends and family, laugh loads and smile til your cheeks hurt!

Train Hard, Keep fit and LOVE Life

Lindy xx



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PANEL OF EXPERTS



Lindy Olsen

With a cert IV in personal training, ISSN Sports Nutrition, level 1 and 2 boxing, Lindy is a 5x natural world figure athlete, fitness ambassador, motivational and lifestyle coach. Lindy loves to share her enthusiasm, experience and passion for health and fitness with others.



Greg Dolman

As a bodytune specialist and executive master trainer, Greg holds certificates III and IV in fitness and an AIF business diploma. He is a Punchfit accredited boxing and kickboxing Padmaster Instructor and Australian Natural Bodybuilding of Victoria judge and workshop presenter.



Geoff Edwards

Geoff is an internationally accredited life coach with more than 25 years of coaching experience. He has impacted over 20,000 individuals and clients worldwide through his coaching work and publications.



Belinda Potter

Belinda holds a Bachelor of Education and Masters in Adult Education and is a cert IV-qualified personal trainer, Level 1 Precision Nutrition coach and ITN Transformational Nutrition coach. She coaches bikini and figure competitors and has won numerous state and national titles in the ANB, NABBA and IFBB.



Amelia Ricci

Amelia is a personal trainer, Pilates instructor and yoga teacher with 20 years experience. She is a qualified personal trainer and group fitness instructor and holds a Bachelor and Master of Business. Amelia is a 2x fitness model champion and mentor to some of Australia's successful fitness and bikini models.

COVER GIRLS/ AMBASSADORS



Skye Cushway

Specialising in body transformations and empowering women to love themselves, Skye is a fitness model, ISSN sports nutrition coach, yoga instructor, 2x Oxygen cover girl and natural figure competitor. She's extremely passionate about helping women to reach their full potential.



Justine Switalla

As a Les Mills presenter, writer, author, model, body transformation specialist, public speaker, presenter and ambassador for Oxygen and Body Science, Justine is passionate and determined to motivate, educate and inspire women to be the best they can be!



Lesley Maxwell

Flirtatious and fun-loving, Lesley redefines what it means to be over 50 and fabulous. She is a personal trainer, figure competitor, Oxygen ambassador and regular contributor and author of Get The Body You Want (2012).



Penny Lomas

Penny is a personal trainer and level 2 Biosignature Modulation Practitioner. She specialises in hormone coaching, conditioning, holistic lifestyle coaching and body transformation. Penny is also a health and fitness magazine columnist and 3x Oxygen cover girl.



Sharna Bender

Sharna is an INBA Pro Fitness Model, Natural Olympia gold medallist and Oxygen ambassador. She is passionate about helping others achieve their goals and aspirations and believes a positive mindset and consistency are the foundations for a happy and healthy lifestyle.

PHOTO CREDIT: AMANDA, PENNY, JUSTINE, SKYE, CLAUDETTE, LINDY, GREG, JONATHAN BY DALLAS OLEN | LESLEY PHOTO BY ANDREW K | ALL OTHERS SUPPLIED BY RESPECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS

SPECIAL GUESTS



Tim Cassettari

Tim is a Sydney-based health and wellbeing expert. As an Accredited Practising Dietitian and nutritionist, he is one of Australia's few health and wellness experts who has university studies in nutrition, exercise and psychology. Tim specialises in helping people with not only what they can do to improve their health and wellbeing, but more importantly, how they can make those changes stick. He also writes and speaks regularly about how we can cultivate a life of health and happiness. You can subscribe to his blog for free advice at www.timcassettari.com



Dr Cris Beer

Dr Cris Beer is a medical doctor, health consultant, corporate speaker and specialist in nutritional medicine. She specialises not just in the prevention and treatment of illnesses, but in the attaining of optimum health. She believes a person can develop resistance to illnesses that plaque our society today including premature ageing, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, emotional and mental health problems, as well hormonal problems. By employing simple strategies, Dr Cris believes that a restoration of health and vitality can be achieved.



Nikki Fogden-Moore

Nikki specialises in private coaching for high achievers to bring business and personal vitality to life. She runs tailored corporate vitality programs, writes regularly for several business and health magazines and has been running leadership and private retreats for over a decade internationally.

You can reach her on nikki@thevitalitycoach.com.au or www.thevitalitycoach.com.au.



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WE ASKED...

"What is your health/fitness goal for 2016?"

HERE'S WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY!





EMMA MCKAY:

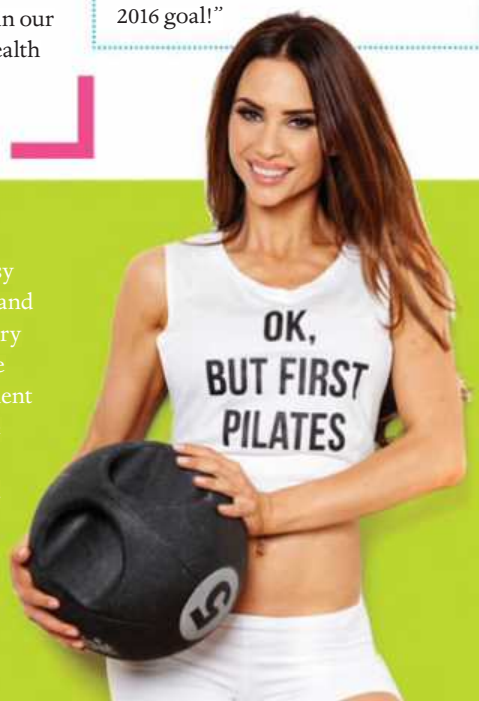
"My goal for 2016 is to grow more lean muscle and compete at the WBFF again next year. I don't want to try to make my body look like someone else's; I want to see how great I can make my own body and inspire other people my age to do the same. Just because other people may have more training experience, doesn't mean we can't make a difference in our own lives and achieve our own health and fitness goals!"

MICHELLE TRAINOR:

"I'm a 35-year-old bikini pro competitor who does not know how to swim! It's a fear that I have to get over and I'm making it my 2016 goal!"

RENEE SILJEG:

"As a busy working mum of two very energetic children (six and eight years old), one of my health and fitness goals for next year is to learn yoga! I have attempted poses before and adore the openness they create in my body (especially after a long run or tough Pilates session!) but I'm excited to truly learn the practice and to know why the movements benefit my body. I want to be able to focus and calm my mind through meditation and breathing (not an easy task!) and to understand the culture and history of it. The ability to be present in each moment is a goal that I will be mindful of everyday throughout 2016 and beyond!"





JESS LOVEJOY

"I have just lost 13kg in a period of 12 weeks and have proven to myself that anything is possible. I am competing in the 2016 season AWNBS and INBA QLD titles with guidance from Ken Ross from Flexr6. Bring on the journey and challenges that 2016 may face."



ELIZA BANKS:

"My 2016 goal is to win at nationals in a bodybuilding competition and take it even further to compete overseas. I am a big believer in setting goals and working towards them; it keeps me happy and motivated to see dreams turn into reality. I want to inspire people to believe in themselves. Hopefully one day I will see myself on the cover of *Oxygen* magazine, lead people into the fitness and health industry and inspire them to be the best version of themselves."



JOANNA TUREK:

"My goal for 2016 is to continue to empower women to feel stronger and more confident in their own skin through the power of fitness. I'm banishing the stigma that women can't be as strong or as fit as men… one female at a time. As a personal trainer and a course coach at the Australian Institute of Fitness, my goal is for all women to feel confident in the weights room and hopefully that confidence translates into other facets of their life!"



BECS DENT:

"To find balance in all aspects of my life by creating a healthier relationship with food. I'll be focusing on nutrition and strength training with the goal of competing in my first fitness competition in May, 2016."



LISA ZIZZARI:

"I'm 45, live in beautiful Coquitlam, BC, Canada, and I've had severe Crohn's disease for more than 20 years. However, in 2016, I'm setting my disease aside and allowing my health to shine by taking centre stage literally; I'm entering my very first competition in Vancouver, July 2016. Sharing my photo with *Oxygen* is sure to help me stay focused on attaining my goals and achieving my best physique. This year I will venture toward my walk on stage with confidence because of the support, information and advice I receive from this incredible magazine and my family."

***Oxygen* would love to wish all of these gorgeous Oxygirls and everyone in the *Oxygen* community the best of luck with their 2016 goals.** Remember, it's not about the destination but the journey, so have fun, laugh and smile along the way! Make this year count!

We see you!

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HERE ARE SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE PHOTOS SHARED WITH US ON INSTAGRAM. WE LOVE SEEING OUR FELLOW FITNESS LOVERS STICKING TO THEIR GOALS AND ACHIEVING AMAZING THINGS!



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DETOX YOUR MIND

January is traditionally the time to set your New Year's resolutions, detox your body and begin the New Year with a clean slate. However there is no point in setting goals about your food, training and more without doing an emotional detox first.

Mention the word 'detox' and it conjures up ideas of juicing and fasting and sweating out all the 'bad stuff'! But to me, a detox means clearing your mind and getting into the right headspace to make significant changes. Our mind is usually the thing that stops us, so by going into the New Year with a detoxed "mind", you'll be sure to reach your goals!

For a lot of us, we wear many hats! You could be a mum, a partner, a sister, a friend, you could work full-time and on top of all that you have to find the time for yourself… how is that even possible? Take it from me; I do all of those things plus manage our publishing business…and my own brand! Working 60 hours or more a week isn't out of the ordinary for me, but if I don't take the time to chill and centre myself, I am no good to anyone especially my little girl who needs me more than ever to be her mummy!

While logically my time might be better spent getting into the office that little bit earlier to get stuck into the day when my mind is fresh and it's quiet, I know that if I don't get to the gym or get to the beach for a walk then my focus will suffer for the rest of the day.

Detoxing your mind doesn't have to be something that takes hours a day, otherwise I wouldn't do it. All the small things add up and help along the way. Here are my favourite ways to detox the mind that don't take too long at all!

- ☐ Write a "let go" list. Every night, jot down the things that you didn't get to that day, get them out of your head so you can enjoy a peaceful and restorative sleep.
- ☐ Take 20 big belly breathes. This can be done anywhere! Sitting on the toilet, at your desk – wherever! It helps to oxygenate your blood and gives you a clearer head instantly!
- ☐ Be one with nature. Get outside, feel the sunshine on your face, the cool breeze. Take your shoes off and connect with the earth, you'll be amazed at how grounded you feel.
- ☐ Meditate, sit still for 5 minutes. Close your eyes and put on some soothing music. If a thought comes into your mind, acknowledge it and move on. Take your concentration back to the music and how it makes you feel. By doing this daily – even for just 5 minutes – you'll find that the busying thoughts will get less and less!

Do something small for yourself each day so that come January there is no need to actually detox, it's simply part of your daily non-negotiable behaviours. Your mind, body and everyone in your life will thank you for it!

Train hard, keep fit and love life!

Lindy xx



PHOTO CREDIT: DALLAS OLSEN

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What's your ***top health and fitness tip*** *for year-round motivation?*





SKYE

Throughout the year you will have highs and lows in your motivation, and this happens to the best of us.

One thing you can do is mix up your workouts regularly to stay inspired.

When I lose my mojo I invest in a personal trainer to give me new ideas, motivation, workouts and accountability. Another thing that can help is to join a boot camp, fitness class, challenge at your gym or online program. Keep it interesting and stay consistent. Always love, trust and honour yourself.

JUSTINE

Firstly, understand that it's a lifestyle - so train like there is no finish line! This is honestly the best goal you could ever have; you can't fail if the goal is ongoing. Sure you will have bad days, even bad weeks - but when you have developed good habits and enjoy living a healthy and balanced lifestyle, then you will get back up, dust yourself off and keep going. Aim for a life full of love, health and happiness and realise that no one is perfect. Just be the best version of you that you can be and do what makes you happy!

LINDY, SKYE, JUSTINE PHOTO: DALLS OLSEN



LINDY

You have to do it for you; if you do it for any other reason, you won't keep doing it, trust me I know! You may find it easier if you have someone to help keep you accountable like a PT or a gym buddy who you can meet on a regular basis. In all seriousness, I am never that motivated to get to the gym, however I always feel amazing afterwards. Thankfully, I know myself well enough to make sure that I just get out the door and go!

If you're anything like me, your motivation will come in waves throughout the year, some weeks you'll be so dedicated and driven to achieving your goals and other weeks you'll fall of the wagon – what I want you to remember is that this kind of pattern is totally normal.

It's what you do when your motivation is lacking that truly matters. Focus on doing your absolute BEST!

Regardless of what you've got on your plate, try to do something active everyday, especially on the days you least want to do it. Remember, none of us are 100 per cent motivated every single day of the year, so give each day your best and 2016 will be an awesome year for you!





SHARNA, PENNY, LESLEY PHOTO CREDIT: DALLAS OLSEN

LESLEY:

Everything we do stems from our thoughts, including our healthy lifestyle. If we look at keeping our body in tip-top shape as hard work then that's exactly what it will become. In my years as a fitness professional I have noticed that many women find clean eating more of a challenge than training – and yet what we eat plays such a HUGE part in overall outcome (approximately 80 per cent).

I suggest making your healthy diet a priority. People ask me on a daily basis how I maintain a clean diet all-year round and if I ever feel like "just eating what I want"…and I say "but I do" and I really mean it! Imagine if you were in the finest restaurant and the waiter was describing my typical meals: "organic poached eggs on sprouted grain bread served with a fresh garden salad drizzled with cold pressed flax oil" or "slow-cooked lamb shanks served with organic broad beans" etc. I'm sure you wouldn't think of eating clean as such a sacrifice but rather more of a luxury. And it is. Simply change your view on clean eating to be something you enjoy and it will make all the difference.

Love what you do for your amazing body – and it will love you right back!

PENNY

My top tip for staying motivated all year round is

to always, always, always consider training as part of your lifestyle.

Once you include it in your schedule, it is an appointment that you always keep. Even if you don't feel like it, just turn up and do some stretching. Motivation is not physical, it is mental, so switch your mindset to tell yourself "I am a proactive doer, I am a person who exercises and eats healthy to nourish my body and mind." I do this daily to remind myself of my values and WHY I train and lead a healthy lifestyle.

SHARNA:

Focus on how great you feel from working out and eating healthy. When I remind myself of how my mind and body feels when I'm treating it right, it's all the motivation I need. I used to focus on my body's appearance as motivation to eat right or to get my butt into the gym, but all this did was put me in a negative mind frame. If I didn't see the results I wanted or I wasn't where I 'should be' at a certain point in time, I would beat myself up about it and then think 'what's the point?' Weight loss or muscle gains do not happen overnight.

Try to take the focus off losing weight or building that booty you've always wanted and try focusing on how good it makes you feel instead.

Once the stress and pressure you have put on yourself lifts, you will be surprised at the results you get. Try to think positive thoughts in all situations and enjoy your healthy lifestyle.



Oxygen's big thumbs up: the walking university classroom

You've probably heard of treadmill desks by now, but Sweden's KTH Royal Institute of Technology has come up with the walking classroom. Not only did students get outside and move their bodies, but they also felt more free to share their opinions and participate in class. And because sitting for long periods has been associated with higher risk of diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease, it might be time to adopt this idea stateside!

The mind-muscle connection: proven

Research has proven what *Oxygen* readers have known for years: using the power of your mind can affect your muscles physically. Scientists studied the role of mental imagery on people who had limbs in casts for a prolonged period. Half the participants performed mental exercises wherein they imagined intensely contracting their wrist for five seconds, then resting for five seconds for 13 rounds; the other half didn't use any imagery. At the end of four weeks, those who practised their mind-muscle connection lost 50 per cent less strength and were able to regain full activation of their muscles sooner than those who did not.

» **Try it:** Next time you go to the gym, take a moment and focus on the muscle you will be working. If it's your biceps, for example, imagine curling the weight up, how it will feel, how you'll squeeze at the top, how much weight you'll lift, how you'll breathe — anything and everything visual, tactile and sensual having to do with the exercise. Then pick up the weight and perform it.



MOVE OF THE MONTH: SHOOTING STAR

Tired of standard Supermans? Then try this posterior-chain alternative that trains your entire back, glutes and outer thighs as well as your core and shoulders.

Setup: Lie face-down on a Bosu with your belly on the centre of the dome. Extend your arms overhead and your legs behind you in the air and shift forward or back on the dome until you're perfectly balanced on top, parallel to the floor.

Move: Slowly open your legs and arms simultaneously, moving them toward each other in space so your body makes an X if viewed from above. Slowly return to the start and repeat. O



> *"It is better to make many small steps in the right direction than to make a great leap forward only to stumble backward."*
> — PROVERB

BOTTOM PHOTO BY ROBERT REIFF

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Craving coffee?

By Jessie R. Shafer, RD



Drinking coffee has been linked to lowering the risk of mild cognitive impairment (MCI), which is a slow and increasing decline in cognitive abilities, such as memory and thinking skills. But, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, participants who increased their coffee consumption during the 3½-year study period were twice as likely to develop MCI than those who limited their coffee intake to one cup or less per day. Those who maintained a consistent coffee intake (neither increasing or decreasing intake) showed no increased risk of MCI.

» THE TAKE-AWAY? Moderate and regular coffee consumption may have neuroprotective effects against MCI, but the greatest risk comes for those who rarely drink coffee and increase intake over time.



STACK YOUR HEALTH DECK

When it comes to setting new habits (for example: drink more water, move more during the day), behaviour scientists agree you'll have the most success when intentionally anchoring a new behaviour to an old one, referred to as "habit stacking." For example, if the first thing you do every morning is go to the bathroom, add the new habit of drinking a glass of water immediately after.

» THE TAKE-AWAY: Find individual triggers for each new habit you want to adopt to promote a mental link between your old and new habits (and minimise having to rely on willpower).

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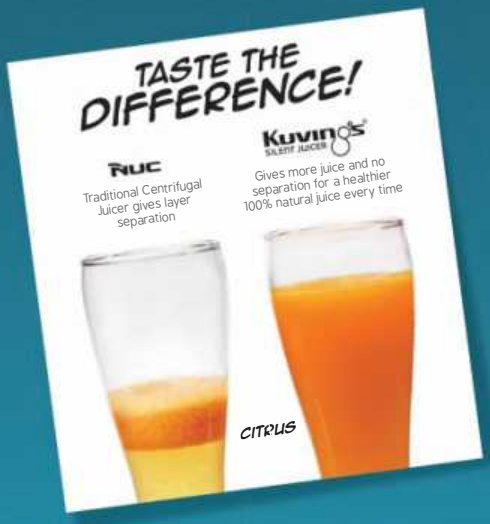
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Workout body fixes

By Lara McGlashan, MFA, CPT, Fitness Editor

Yes, we all want to look gorgeous when we're working out, but training in full-on Kardashian pancake makeup and hair spray is not your best bet for healthy skin and hair. Here are some tips to keep your face, hair and body fresh and fabulous.

- Change your outfit after training as soon as possible. Acne, folliculitis and yeasty issues down below can arise if you stay in damp clothing too long.
- **Bring your own towels and face cloths to protect your skin from irritation from chemicals or bleach used in the gym towels.**
- Staph, fecal matter, E. coli and even MRSA bacteria lurk in the nooks and crannies of gym equipment, so don't touch any of your body parts post-workout until you've thoroughly washed your hands and/or used a generous dose of hand sanitiser.
- Wear your hair in a loose ponytail or high braided bun to prevent tangles.
- Spray a little dry shampoo around your hairline and nape of your neck before training to tame the frizzies; post-workout, use the same dry shampoo to neutralise oils and odours and help refresh your hairdo.



YAY OF THE DAY: EATING CHOCOLATE IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH!

In a study of middle-aged people, eating 3.140g of chocolate every day — milk or dark — translated to a 29 per cent lower risk of heart disease and a 23 per cent lower risk of stroke. The flavonoids in chocolate have anti-inflammatory properties, and the fatty acids contribute to good heart health.

Five healthier ways to indulge:

1. Dip a banana in melted chocolate and freeze overnight for a tasty dessert.
2. Use dark chocolate chips in a batch of low-fat oatmeal cookies.
3. Spread Nutella on a fat-free plain biscuit.
4. Grab a small handful of chocolate-covered almonds.
5. Shave dark chocolate on top of plain Greek yoghurt and top with raspberries.



The power of peppermint

Want a boost in energy? Try peppermint. Peppermint oil invigorates you while also cooling your skin and increasing athletic performance. Check out these suggestions for its use from aromatherapy expert Charlynn Avery of Aura Cacia and turn a so-so training session into a super one:

- **Put a few drops in your shoes to invigorate and cool your feet.**
- **Place a few drops on a wet cloth and place it on your neck to help cool down.**
- **Diffuse the oil and inhale to energise before training.**
- **Chew peppermint gum to help reduce hunger and cravings.**
- **Add to lotions or massage formulas post-training to help recovery.**

Note: always dilute oils before applying to skin. Add to neutral oils such as vegetable and olive oil, water or unscented bath products such as shampoo or shower gel.

2/3

PERCENTAGE OF AUSTRALIANS WHO ARE CURRENTLY OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE

SOURCE: *JAMA INTERNAL MEDICINE*




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Perform at your peak

Log your best cardio or strength performance ever with these five no-sweat tricks. **By Karen Asp**

Whether you're hoping to log a PR in your next 10K or want to excel in your weight-training program, you know you have to train hard. But if you want to work smarter, not harder, you also can try these five simple tricks to help you perform your best — no extra sweat required.

1} Crank the tunes early: Runners who listened to music for the first 1.5 kilometres of a 5K shaved about 30 seconds off their times, according to a study from the *International Journal of Sports Medicine.* Listening to music during the last 1.5K of the event made no difference. "Listening to music could draw athletes' focus away from internal sensations of fatigue," says Adriano E. Lima-Silva, Ph.D., study co-author from the Federal University of Pernambuco in Brazil. This effect is probably strongest at the start of a race or workout; by the end, even the most motivational music may not be able to overpower those feelings of fatigue.

2} See red: When students in Years 4-10 and undergraduate college students saw red (via a number or word) before pinching and holding a metal clasp open or squeezing a handgrip with their dominant hand, their reactions were faster and more forceful than groups that saw blue or gray. Red is actually a danger cue, say researchers in a study from the journal *Emotion,* which is why physical reactions improved. They caution, though, that the effect is short-lived and may be best for activities in which you need a quick burst of speed and strength such as weightlifting.

3} Give nerves the fist: Right-handed athletes were less likely to choke under pressure when they squeezed a ball in their left hand before a big competition, according to a study from the *Journal of Experimental Psychology.* When they squeezed with their right hand, however, they choked. Squeezing with the left hand most likely activated parts of the brain's right side, which then led to an increased feeling of relaxation, says Juergen Beckmann, lead study author from the Technical University Munich in Germany. This technique works best for activities that rely on motor skills like soccer, karate and badminton versus performances based on strength or stamina.

4} Go bitter: If you want to push yourself harder, slugging a bitter drink before your workout or event could do the trick. A study from *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that cyclists who drank a bitter solution, in this case a quinine solution, pushed themselves significantly harder before sprinting than those who consumed either plain water, a sweet solution or no solution. One reason? Exposure to something unpleasant has been shown to improve reaction times.

5} Psych yourself up: According to a study from the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research,* runners who engaged in 30 seconds of imagery one to two minutes before an event (they were asked to visualise sprinting as fast as possible and setting a new personal best) performed better in both the 10-metre and 30-metre sprints. Benefits weren't seen when they used imagery three or five minutes before their competition, leading researchers to conclude that imagery is best used immediately before competition, especially with activities that require speed.

Think fast! Runners who engaged in 30 seconds of **positive imagery** a minute or two before a sprinting competition performed better. Benefits weren't seen when they used imagery three or five minutes before their event.

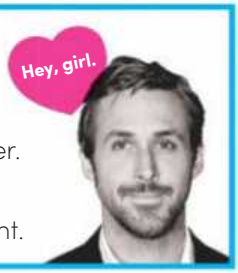


PHOTO (FAR LEFT) BY CORY SORENSEN. (BOTTOM) JAGUAR PS / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

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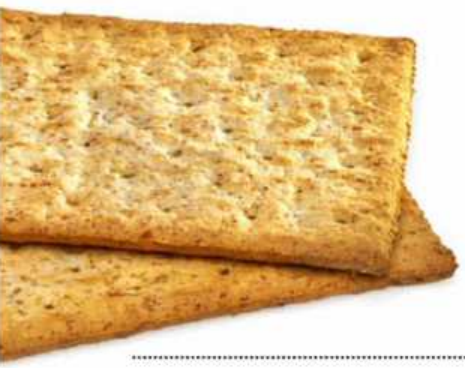
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Kick it or pick it

BY **KATHERINE BAQLEH**

Healthy Swaps for Summer Entertaining

PHOTO CREDIT:SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Swap 1: Jatz crackers for Vita Weat crackers

Why?

With much less salt and fat per cracker, you can go back more than a couple of times to enjoy the variety of cheese and dips available without piling on excess pre-meal calories.

How the numbers add up

Food	Energy	Protein	Carb	Sugars	Total fat	Sat fat	Sodium	Fibre
Jatz crackers	1950kJ	7.6g	66g	6g	18.3g	3.9g	490mg	3.2g
Vita Weat crackers	1570kJ	12.2g	62.3g	1.8g	9.4g	1.1g	452mg	12g

Swap 2: Creamy dips for legume- or vegetable-based dips.

Why?

Swapping creamy dips (e.g. French Onion or Three Olive dip) for legume- or vegie-based dips (e.g. hommus, tzatziki, eggplant, guacamole, beetroot or tomato salsa) saves you large amounts of salt and saturated fat, and packs in more nutrients such as protein, fibre and iron. You can enjoy a little more, without it affecting your waistline (especially when they're home-made).

How the numbers add up

Food	Energy	Protein	Carb	Sugars	Total fat	Sat fat	Sodium
Creamy dips	925kJ	4.7g	10.3g	7.4g	17.7g	12.3g	719mg
Legume/vegetable dips	570kJ	5.7g	5.8g	1.5g	9.6g	1.3g	265mg





KATHERINE BAQLEH
Katherine is an Accredited Practising Dietitian, nutritionist and founder of Health Victory Nutrition Experts. She conducts private consultations, menu reviews, seminars and conferences in a number of different communities and corporate settings. Her main passion lies with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and weight management.
To find out more visit **www.healthvictorynutrition.com.au**

DAA Dietitians Association of Australia

Swap 3: Deli meats for lean meats

Why?

By swapping deli meats such as salami, mortadella and frankfurts for lean meats - such as ham off the bone, turkey, chicken or extra-lean sausages - you'll consume much less saturated fat and salt. Containing a greater amount of protein, lean meats are also better for health-conscious guests.



How the numbers add up

Food	Energy	Protein	Carb	Sugars	Total fat	Sat fat	Sodium
Deli meats	1529kJ	27.3g	10.2g	2.9g	24.1g	9.7g	1330mg
Lean meats	399kJ	17.4g	1.4g	1.3g	2.7g	0.5g	1100mg

PHOTO CREDITS:SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Swap 4: Regular-fat cheese platter for low-fat cheese platter

Why?

Cut down on total fat and saturated fat without skimping on protein and calcium by choosing low-fat cheese varieties for your cheese platters. Plus, with low-fat cheese, you can still enjoy the taste and 'cheese-pairing' experience.

How the numbers add up

Food	Energy	Protein	Carb	Sugars	Total fat	Sat fat	Sodium
Regular-fat cheese	1690kJ	25.8g	1g	1g	33.3g	21.6g	650mg
Low-fat cheese	1360kJ	28.4g	2.9g	0.6g	22.4g	15.4g	580mg

Swap 5: Beer nuts for dried fruit and unsalted nut trail mix

Why?

Nuts are a nutrient powerhouse and maximum health benefits are gained by enjoying a variety of nut types. Add nutrition and colour to your table setting by including dried fruit (such as dates) and nuts (such as almonds and walnuts).



How the numbers add up

Food	Energy	Protein	Carb	Sugars	Total fat	Sat fat	Sodium	Fibre
Beer nuts	2371kJ	26g	16g	4g	49g	7g	320mg	8g
Dried fruit and unsalted nut trail mix	2208kJ	17g	39g	31g	38g	8g	130mg	5g

Swap 6: Potato crisps for air-popped popcorn

Why?

Corn is a high-protein and high-fibre wholegrain. You can enjoy a bowl of popcorn without worrying about the high saturated fat levels found in crisps. Lightly salted popcorn is fine, but steer clear from the microwave popcorn packs.



How the numbers add up

Food	Energy	Protein	Carb	Sugars	Total fat	Sat fat	Sodium	Fibre
Potato crisps	2260kJ	5.9g	53g	3.9g	34g	15.5g	745mg	6g
Air-popped popcorn	1970kJ	9.1g	42.4g	3.5g	23.9g	2.9g	685mg	16.8g

NEW YEAR, *New You*



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

A recent study found that only 24 per cent of Australians and New Zealanders actually like going to work (Gallup 2013). Are you part of this 24 per cent? Or are you part of the other 76 per cent that can only dream of what it's like to go to work excited about the day? Well, *Oxygen* is here to help. If you're passionate about health and fitness and are looking for a career change in 2016, perhaps a career in the fitness industry is what you need. To get you on your way to a life-changing career (that will make you LOVE going to work each day), we've rounded up some of your training options in Australia. It's now up to you to make it happen!



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Their reputation is one of high quality with great customer service and knowledge from trainers and presenters who have many years of industry experience. They look at the body as a unit and focus on a strong core and the ability to move effectively with strength and power through all plains of motion.

Perform Better's foundations come from the best in the world of sports conditioning, strength and conditioning and movement specialists. They give you the latest research from around the globe on what the professionals are doing right now with the top competitors in the world! This means you don't just learn from a system that worked ten years ago.

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Delivering fitness courses throughout Australia, the Academy of Fitness gives you the option of studying online or face to face. You can get started with your studies with no upfront costs – simply pay as you go! You can also take advantage of contacting one of the academy's friendly career advisors to receive career advice FREE of charge. Plus you will get FREE introductions to fitness employers throughout Australia! Whether you are looking for a part-time job or to run your own personal training business, the Academy of Fitness can help you every step of the way. The Academy of Fitness courses are nationally and internationally recognised so you can work anywhere in Australia or overseas.

Meet Arnaliese, a current student with the Academy. Arnaliese is a perfect example of how easy it is to make a career change at any point in your life. Originally working in the finance industry, Arnaliese found that her personal passion for fitness meant she was in high demand from her friends and family for fitness and health advice. She decided to turn her passion into a full-time occupation and her first step was to enrol into the Certificate III and IV in Fitness with the Academy of Fitness. With the assistance of the Academy of Fitness, Arnaliese now has all the skills and knowledge required to set up a successful outdoor personal training business!

To learn more about becoming a qualified personal trainer, contact the Academy of Fitness on 1300 650 198 or **www.academyoffitness.com.au**

What's on



STAY PUFT

Walyunga National Park, WA, 31 January 2016

This race features some serious hills and with the many climbs come gorgeous views, particularly on the highest sections. An abundance of kangaroos in this park may provide a happy distraction from your bursting lungs, too. There are short and long courses to suit experienced and beginner runners, however the longer course offers a particularly great view down to the river and alongside the river.

For more information visit www.perthtrailseries.com



THE SUCK

Melbourne, 15 January 2016 and Sydney, 29 January 2016

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For more information visit australia.gutcheckfitness.com/the-suck/



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Paving her own way to success

ONCE TOLD SHE WAS 'TOO SEXY' FOR WOMEN'S MAGAZINES, LYZABETH LOPEZ HAS PROVEN MANY PEOPLE WRONG. AFTER GRACING THE COVER OF SEVERAL OTHER FEMALE FITNESS MAGAZINES, NOW SHE'S ADDING *OXYGEN* AUSTRALIA TO HER LIST!

BY **KIRSTIN CUTHBERT** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SATIOPHOTO.COM**



FAST FACTS

Name: Lyzabeth Lopez
City: Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Occupation: Master Trainer & Holistic Nutritionist
Height: 164cm
Weight: 58-61kg

CONNECT WITH LYZABETH

Instagram: lyzabethlopez
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Website:
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As a PRO fitness model, owner of the world-wide Hourglass Workout franchise, registered holistic nutritionist/kinesiologist and with a social media following of over 3 million, plus 30 million views on Google+, Lyzabeth Lopez is one inspiring woman. Although she has reached an incredible place today through her determination, love and hard work, life hasn't always been easy. After overcoming anorexia as a teen, Lyzabeth was told she was too 'sexy' for many of the things she wanted to achieve. However, Lyzabeth never gave up, she overcame hurdle after hurdle and has achieved so much more than she ever thought possible.

At the age of 12, after a gymnastics injury, Lyzabeth started to gain weight. Not wanting to be made fun of by her class mates, she joined a gym and began training. She trained with a group of boys and as a result trained like one of the boys, lifting heavy weights. She started to get bigger and didn't understand why so she became vegan as she thought it was the meat that was making her larger.

Lacking knowledge about nutrition and her body type, the added carbs in her vegan lifestyle made her gain even more weight so she decided to start running in the hopes of getting 'skinny'.

"Eventually I started running or walking every time I got hungry. This slowly turned into anorexia and exercise addiction. I got down to only eating a bran muffin and a piece of fruit a day and would run for two hours. I almost died to be skinny, literally," she says.

The years of abuse Lyzabeth put her body through eventually ended when she discovered fitness competitions. She slowly started to add food back into her diet and weights into her training and began prepping for a show. She ended up winning her first ever fitness model competition, found a new passion and went on to win many more titles.

Through all of her training she was able to figure out what methods worked best for her and this has allowed her to become the master trainer she is today.

"I've been through so much in my years of training. I always wanted to train properly and knew the end goal I wanted, but not knowing how to get there was beyond frustrating," she says.

"Through years of trial and error I now know how to get results. My training is specific to my goals at the time, e.g. if I want to be curvier, slimmer, more ripped, etc. I'll make minor modifications based on my goals and within a couple of weeks, I see results," she says.

"It means the world to me to have the opportunity to teach women about eating real food and how to work with their natural bodies."

Early on in Lyzabeth's fitness modelling career, as she won show after show, she started to dream of gracing female fitness magazine covers. However, as she began sending her images out, she discovered that people saw her in a much different way than she saw herself.

"I was always told I was too curvy or too 'sexy' for editorial. I know that may not sound like a bad thing, but it really was. I was a young, smart trainer and model and no one would take me seriously!" she says.

"I was told to send my pictures to the sexier magazines, but I just had no interest in posing that way, or being 'that girl'. I was more of a happy-go-lucky 'woman-power' type of girl but I was classed as a 'men's magazine' girl… This was and still is beyond frustrating."

As the years passed, it became more and more apparent to Lyzabeth that she was never going to be a cover girl. One time she was even fired from a fashion show by a top brand in fitness apparel because her 'butt was too big'.

This was before big butts became incredibly popular and Lyzabeth says it was absolutely 'heart-breaking'. However, when the social media craze started and she first discovered MySpace, she soon realised she could create her own media opportunities and show that she had what it took.

"I flew out and paid for my own shoots on money that I made from personal training and my full-time job as a college professor and youth worker.



I started to gain a following. Next, Facebook launched and I quickly joined that as well. I posted fitness advice and photos from my shoots, YouTube tutorials and even created my own fitness competition training vlog on my channels," she says.

Lyzabeth quickly had a waitlist for her 500-friend cap, so Facebook moved her profile to a 'Fan Page'. As she was one of the very first people with this page, she initially didn't want it. She thought it sounded very 'narcissistic', but she had no choice so she started to build this new platform.

Then Instagram launched and this is where Lyzabeth's career really took off. Her page grew very organically and very quickly. From there she started to be contacted for TV, radio, tours, gym openings, reality shows and magazines. Since the beginning of social media Lyzabeth has actually graced seven fitness magazine covers – eight if you include this one!

Today she trains thousands of women around the world and teaches them to understand training, nutrition and their bodies.

"It means the world to me to have the opportunity to teach women about eating real food and how to work with their natural bodies so they don't go through what I did. Seeing them learn, get excited about the results and be healthy means so much to me," she says.

Not only does Lyzabeth inspire her clients but she inspires her followers all over the world.

"It's amazing to have the opportunity to touch so many lives. When I post, I post for those with a thirst for knowledge and who want to be motivated. The goal is not to just show my body all day, it's all about motivation and learning. I want to help women gain power over their bodies by gaining knowledge," she says.

By never giving up on her goals and staying determined no matter what obstacles she faced, Lyzabeth has achieved more than she ever imagined.

"It's been a blessing that was made possible through amazing team work, perseverance and a belief that anything is possible," she says.

LYZABETH'S DIET

MONDAY

NUTRITION

Pre-breakfast: Cardio, water and BCAAs

Breakfast: Chia cereal and 2 slices of organic turkey bacon

Snack: Freshly squeezed veggie juice and protein shake

Lunch: Steak salad and small sweet potato

WORKOUT: UPPER BODY AND ABS

Post-workout: Protein shake with glutamine and simple sugar

Dinner: Cauliflower soup, chicken, broccoli, carrots and peas

Snack: 20 grams of dark chocolate

TUESDAY

NUTRITION

Pre-breakfast: Cardio, water and BCAA

Breakfast: Super foods cereal with almond milk

Snack: 150-calorie low-sugar protein bar and fresh veggie juice

Lunch: Ground turkey with veggies in romaine wraps

WORKOUT: LEGS

Post-workout: 4 eggs (2 whole, 2 whites), veggies, strawberries dipped in Sucanat sugar (post-workout protein/simple sugar for recovery)

Dinner: Chicken and asparagus

Snack: Protein ice cream (home made recipe: frozen fruit, protein powder, coconut milk and chia)

WEDNESDAY

NUTRITION

Pre-breakfast: Cardio, water and BCAA

Breakfast: Organic omelette, organic bacon and asparagus

Snack: 35g dark chocolate and fresh veggie juice

Lunch: Lean ground turkey with homemade zucchini noodles

WORKOUT: SHOULDERS, CORE AND DRILLS

Post-workout: Protein shake with fruit, veggies, 1 tsp dextrose and coconut milk

Dinner: Steak salad

Snack: Frozen mango and raspberries

THURSDAY

NUTRITION

Pre-breakfast: Cardio, water and BCAA

Breakfast: Chia cereal and 2 slices of organic turkey bacon

Snack: Fruit

Lunch: Zucchini soup, fish and small kale salad

WORKOUT: CORE AND FULL-BODY DRILLS

Post-workout: Protein shake with veggies, fruit, 1 tsp dextrose and coconut milk

Dinner: Jerk chicken salad and sweet potato fries (baked)

Snack: Protein shake

& WORKOUT WEEK

FRIDAY

NUTRITION

Pre-breakfast: Cardio, water and BCAA

Breakfast: Super foods cereal with rice milk

Snack: 150-calorie low-sugar protein bar

Lunch: Chicken and steamed mixed veggies

WORKOUT: LEGS

Post-workout: Protein shake

Dinner: Steak and veggie soup

Snack: 35g dark chocolate

SATURDAY

NUTRITION

Breakfast: Steak and asparagus

Snack: Omelette

Lunch: Jerk chicken salad

WORKOUT: PILATES/YOGA/BIKE RIDE OR REST

Post-workout: Fruit smoothie with protein

Dinner: Cheat meal usually

Snack: Something chocolate (not necessarily dark)

SUNDAY

NUTRITION

Pre-breakfast: Cardio, Pilates or yoga

Breakfast: Chia cereal and 2 slices of organic bacon

Snack: ½ a green protein smoothie

Lunch: Other ½ of green protein smoothie and chocolate chip cookie

WORKOUT: HIIT DRILLS/TABATA DRILLS/PILATES OR REST

Post-workout: Chicken stir fry

Dinner: Fish and asparagus

Snack: Protein ice cream (home-made)



"I want to help women gain power over their bodies by gaining knowledge"

A New Year, a New YOU

Disconnect from technology to connect with your true self.

BY **GEOFF EDWARDS**



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

WE ALL KNOW HOW GREAT IT FEELS TO BE ON HOLIDAY. WE CREATE SPACE AWAY FROM THE NORMAL DISTRACTIONS OF OUR LIVES AND HAVE TIME TO THINK. PERHAPS THIS THINKING LEADS US TO WANT TO MAKE CHANGES IN OUR LIVES AND WE BEGIN TO PUT THESE CHANGES INTO PLACE WHILE ON HOLIDAY. ***Maybe it's to be less stressed, to read more, to get active more often etc. Whatever it is, you find it so easy to do while on holiday and promise you'll return home and keep doing these new things.***

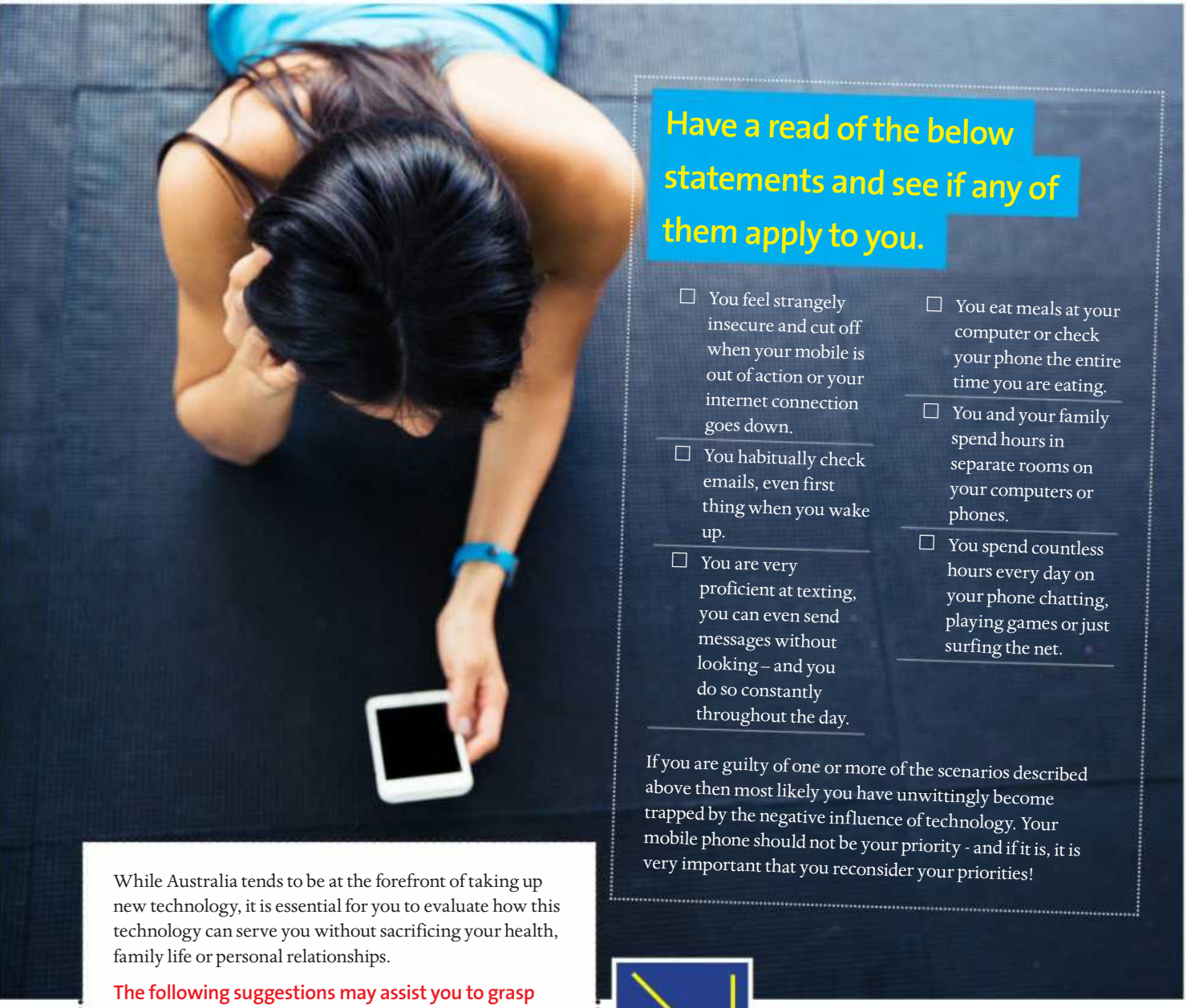
However, once the holiday ends you find yourself back at work, your stress returns, you become too busy to do the things you enjoyed on holiday and it starts to feel like you never had a holiday after all. Unfortunately this situation is something most, if not all of us can relate to. If you want to adopt new approaches in your life and stick to them long-term, it's time to get serious.

TIME TO DISCONNECT

Technology touches everything we do today and it can be very beneficial for families and businesses and in fulfilling your own personal needs. In today's world it is very hard to imagine a life without technology as everything is just a call, mouse click or SMS away. While technology is exciting, life in this world can be a 21st century express train - and we need to know when to step off the train and leave technology alone before it has a negative impact on our lives. We need to be careful that we don't become slaves to our own creations!

Although we have so many potentially labour-saving devices, to what extent do these devices actually improve your lifestyle? New technology can clearly enable us to work faster and more efficiently, but it can also mean that we can't ever really get away and switch off. Many of us are permanently on call or taking work home – this encroaches on family life as well as relationships and has a broader impact on sustaining healthy living. Technology increases the amount of information we have to deal with every day and as a result there is no "space" available to allow new insights to occur. Our attention span becomes shorter and our brain deletes the excess information. While people aim to do things faster, they are not necessarily doing them better.

PHOTO CREDIT:SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Have a read of the below statements and see if any of them apply to you.

- ☐ You feel strangely insecure and cut off when your mobile is out of action or your internet connection goes down.
- ☐ You habitually check emails, even first thing when you wake up.
- ☐ You are very proficient at texting, you can even send messages without looking – and you do so constantly throughout the day.
- ☐ You eat meals at your computer or check your phone the entire time you are eating.
- ☐ You and your family spend hours in separate rooms on your computers or phones.
- ☐ You spend countless hours every day on your phone chatting, playing games or just surfing the net.

If you are guilty of one or more of the scenarios described above then most likely you have unwittingly become trapped by the negative influence of technology. Your mobile phone should not be your priority - and if it is, it is very important that you reconsider your priorities!

PHOTO CREDIT:SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

While Australia tends to be at the forefront of taking up new technology, it is essential for you to evaluate how this technology can serve you without sacrificing your health, family life or personal relationships.

The following suggestions may assist you to grasp the positives out of technology.

- ☐ Decide how technology may be impacting on your life.
- ☐ Be clear on what your life is about, in terms of goals and directions.
- ☐ Understand how technology can support you in the achievement of your ambitions.
- ☐ Know when to "switch off" and be totally technology-free.
- ☐ Create - rather than fill - spaces in your life, as it is in these moments that new discoveries occur.

Allow time for reflection and increase your awareness by writing in a journal, recording your life story and any ideas you are passionate about.

Tips for a new YOU:

- Disconnect
- Build in breaks every day
- Notice if your responses are in line with your true values
- Alter the way you think with limitations in beliefs etc.
- Balance your life
- Imagine how great your new life will be
- Celebrate your success

Discover YOU

Give yourself some time and space to get away from the expectations, the conversations, the noise, the media and the pressure. Take some time each day to go for a long walk and think. Plant yourself on a park bench and look at the beauty around you or take a long, thoughtful road trip. Whatever you do, move away from anything that distracts you from contemplating your life and where you want it to go. In solitude, you should feel independent and self-sufficient - not lonely, needy or afraid.

If the banter of co-workers, parents, friends, or strangers is getting you down, solitude can restore your sense of balance and inner calm. It can remind you that you have a trajectory in life mapped out and that you're marching to it… and not to the worries, fears and hearsay of other people. Ensure at this time that you are in the present moment, rather than the past or looking too much in the future. Remember, you can't drive your life forward if you are always gazing through your rear-view mirror!

Create space in conversations where you can exercise your true values rather than responding to every demand. The key to being proactive is remembering that between stimulus and response there is a space. This space represents your choice and how you can choose to respond to any given situation, person, thought or event. Imagine a pause button between stimulus and response - a button you can engage to pause and think about what is the principle-based response to your given situation. Listen to what your conscience tells you. Listen for what is wise and the principle-based thing to do, and then act.

Change your mind, change your life

Some of the great classics of our time have emphasised the importance of using the power of our mind to create success, for example Napoleon Hill in Think and Grow Rich. By knowing what you want to achieve and by using creative imagination, amazing things can happen. By knowing your internal communications, your rules, references, beliefs, perceptions and associations, you can create a change model to use in an instant for yourself. With the addition of anchoring and reframing, you can recreate that change and develop new models for sustainable success. Then, by knowing yourself, you can work with others to create outcomes that are beneficial overall.





PHOTO CREDITS:SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Consider your health and fitness

Life can be very demanding, and the things you have to deal with on a daily basis can have a huge impact on your energy levels. Taking care of yourself is about deciding what is most important in your life and making sure you focus on your health as a number one priority. When you focus on your health, you maximise your energy and you approach your ambitions with enthusiasm, focus and full power. As a part of that, it is important to focus on your goals, what you eat, drink and how you exercise on a regular basis. To support you with this, it is important to look at other role models who have achieved what you would like to achieve.



GEOFF EDWARDS

Geoff is an internationally accredited life coach with more than 25 years of coaching experience who can support you on your journey to success with results that last. He welcomes correspondence from readers keen to share any successes that they're excited about, or if you would like to develop your own personal success plan related to being 'empowered at every age', you can get in touch with him via **geoffedwards@bigpond.com** or through his website **www.geoffedwards.net** or Facebook: **www.facebook.com/geoff.edwards2**



THE FORGOTTEN GLUTE

The muscle you need to stabilise if you're after a strong (and perky) behind.

BY **TARYN POLOVIN** | MODEL **AMELIA RICCI** | PHOTOGRAPHY **DALLAS OLSEN** | MAKE UP **LISA LEE**

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT THE BEST WAY TO ACHIEVE A GREAT BUTT IS TO SQUAT, AND I DEFINITELY AGREE – THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES! ONE OF THE PRIME MOVERS WHEN SQUATTING IS THE GLUTEUS MAXIMUS MUSCLE.

This is the biggest of the three gluteal muscles and because it's the one that gives you a 'perky' looking backside, everybody tends to focus on it and forget the vitally important gluteus medius. The gluteus medius is a primary stabiliser of the hip, and people with weak gluteus medius muscles often suffer from lower back pain, hip pain and knee pain. Plus, there is no way to squat with good technique if you can't stabilise correctly!

So how can you learn to stabilise properly, work all the muscles in your glutes and achieve that 'perky' butt you're after? Through Pilates! The following series focuses on strengthening the gluteus medius which works as a hip abductor as well as laterally rotating the leg. The series is done in a side lying position and works both aspects of movement. As you progress you may want to add ankle weights but do not do this if it compromises technique.

PILATES CLAM SERIES

Basic Clam

1 Start in a side lying position with your knees bent and heels in line with your butt. Lift your waist slightly off the floor and lengthen your torso. Slightly drop your tailbone towards your heels and engage your core. Try to maintain this position throughout the exercise.

2 Keeping both feet together, lift your top knee off the bottom knee as wide as you can without shifting your body position. Slowly lower the top knee to just touch the bottom knee and repeat 15-30 times.

Elevated Clam

3 Return to the first clam position but rather than keeping your feet on the floor, elevate them.

4 Repeat the series you just performed, opening and closing the knee, with your feet elevated off the floor for the duration. Repeat 15-30 times.

Clam with Extension

5 Repeat the clam movement with your feet elevated, but this time extend your top leg at the top of the movement without altering your posture. Then bend the knee, keeping your hip turned out, to touch the feet together again and lower the top knee. Repeat 15-30 times.

Repeat full sequence 5-10 times.

Forward and Backward Taps

6 Lie on your side with your bottom leg bent at 90° and top leg extended. Lift your waist off the floor and lengthen your torso. Slightly drop your tailbone towards your heels and engage your core. Maintain this posture throughout the exercise. Keeping your body still, lift the top leg 5cm and lower 5cm. Repeat 10 times.

7 Slowly swing your top leg as close to perpendicular as you can without altering your alignment. Lift and lower your leg 5cm in this position. Repeat 10 times.



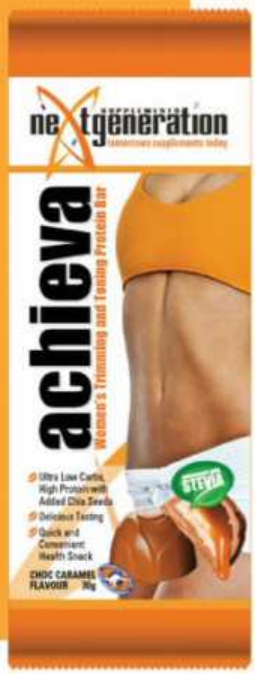
TIP:
For added burn, pulse 25 times at the top of the clam shell movements.

TARYN POLOVIN

Taryn has a degree in exercise science with postgraduate studies in sports nutrition as well as a full studio Pilates certification. She is an international instructor and regularly presents at both Pilates and fitness conferences. Taryn hosted and was the creative director of the international fitness show Aerobics Oz Style and has been involved in the health and fitness industry for over 15 years.

NOURISHMENT FOR YOUR NEW YEAR

As the New Year begins, often we come down from our holiday high and feel lethargic and unmotivated as we return to work and our daily routines. **HOWEVER, WE'VE FOUND THE PERFECT PRODUCTS TO KEEP YOU ENERGISED AND FEELING GREAT AS YOU GET BACK INTO THE SWING OF THINGS AND WORK TOWARDS YOUR NEW YEAR GOALS.**



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If it's ultra-low carbs you're after, look no further. Achieva Women's Trimming and Toning Protein Bars are exceptional tasting, high-protein bars, available in Choc Cherry and Choc Caramel flavours. Each 30g bar is packed with protein (10.4g-10.8g) and has added chia seeds, making them the perfect in-between-meal snack as they leave you feeling fuller for longer. Naturally sweetened with Stevia, Achieva Bars contain extremely low levels of carbohydrates (0.6g-1.4g) and even lower levels of sugar (0.3g-0.9g). Certified gluten-free and suitable for diabetics, they are the ideal guilt-free treat.

For more information visit www.achievalifestyle.com



BOOST YOUR ENERGY

Natural Raw C with Energy includes coconut water, guarana, acai, coconut nectar and natural flavouring to give you that much-needed natural energy boost to keep your mind alert and body invigorated throughout the day. With 100 per cent natural ingredients and no added caffeine or preservatives, it contains electrolytes, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, sodium and potassium all in their most natural form.

For more information visit www.rawc.com.au

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For more information visit www.clifbar.com.au

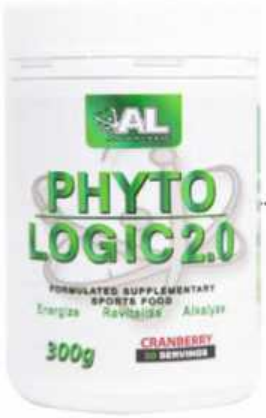
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Happy Soul Blend works to improve digestion and circulation, relieve stress and promote a healthy liver function which can result in more vibrant skin, mental clarity, better weight management and overall health and wellness. The hand-blended mix of seven tea leaves and herbs (including pu-erh, rose petals, schisandra berry, dandelion root, dandelion leaf, magnolia bark and mandarin peel) helps to relax and rejuvenate your mind and body.

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AminoLogic PhytoLogic2.0 is a base requirement for dietary health and wellness, weight loss and lean muscle formation. PhytoLogic2.0 supports detoxification pathways as it works to cleanse the major blood-cleaning organs and rids cells of pollutants. It's loaded with super foods from vegetables and high antioxidant super fruits to energise, alkalise and revitalise. For gut health, PhyotLogic2.0 is arguably unique in its benefits. Spore-forming probiotics guarantee lower digestive tract colonisation with beneficial bacteria. PhytoLogic2.0 is available in the fresh Pineapple flavour and new, super palatable Cranberry.

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The Five DANGEROUS MYTHS BEHIND DETOX DIETING

WITH AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF BENEFITS PROMISED, **ARE THESE LIQUID MIRACLE WORKERS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?**

BY **TIM CASSETTARI**



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Detox diets have been around for years, and their popularity is not surprising. With the New Year approaching, many are looking to put their weight loss resolution into place and often think the best place to start is with a juice cleanse or detox. While it's hard to say no to the promise of better health, weight loss and increased energy, particularly when these changes are said to arrive in as little as a few days time, don't be fooled. Most things that sound too good to be true are and detox diets are no exception.

The details of detox dieting

Detox diets are based on two simple ideas:

1. **Toxins are often a primary cause of poor health**, weight gain, bloating and low energy levels; and

2. **A detox diet effectively removes these toxins,** and thus can help with weight loss, increased energy, improved digestion, and even glowing skin and greater confidence.

A wide range of detox diets are available, including complete fasts, juices or the restriction of certain food or food groups. They also usually come with the addition of costly herbal laxatives, supplements or special 'cleansing' foods or ingredients.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

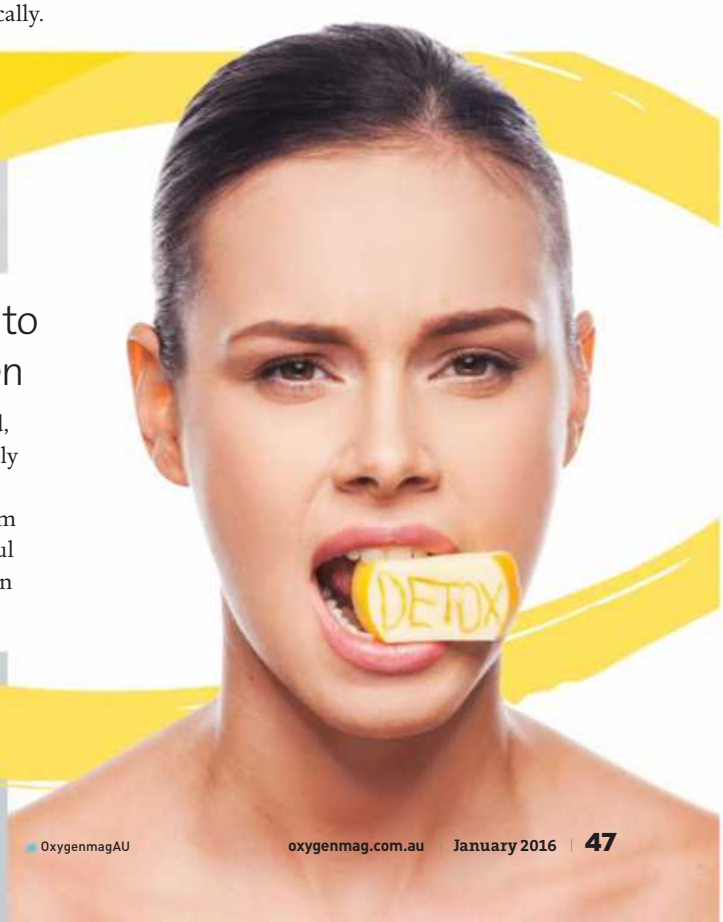


Myth 1: Detox diets effectively remove toxins from our body

A number of scientific reviews on detox diets each report the same conclusion:

there is no good scientific evidence to support their effectiveness in removing toxins from our body.

Indeed, because detox diets very rarely define the 'toxins' that they aim to remove, or the process in which they eliminate them, their claims are difficult to even test scientifically.



Myth 2: Our body needs to detox every now and then

The concept of detox dieting itself is flawed, partly because our body is already extremely well designed to 'detox'. Our liver, lungs, kidneys, intestinal tract and immune system all function to monitor and remove harmful substances that enter our body, often within hours of their consumption.



Myth 3: You'll feel great on a detox diet

It's likely you've heard the glowing testimonials in ads for detox diets, from the general public to A-list celebrities.

From a short-term perspective, they may well be true. That's because when we take on a detox diet, we typically exercise more, eat better and reduce our calorie intake. But of course, it's not the detoxing process that's doing any good. It's the change in lifestyle and drop in calories that is behind the benefits seen.

It's also worth noting that detox diets can bring with them a number of unwanted side effects, which we often don't hear about. These include:

- Low energy levels, tiredness and fatigue;
- Nutritional deficiencies;
- Headaches, nausea and constipation; and
- Lost money on the unnecessary expenses involved in buying detox 'products'

Myth 4: Detox diets result in long-term weight loss

Scientific research tells us that, in the long-term, dieting very often causes overeating and weight gain. ***While we initially may lose some weight, the stress and deprivation associated with limiting what our body desires typically stimulates our appetite.***

This can leave us eating more calories and gaining even more weight than before we started, no matter how much willpower we may have.

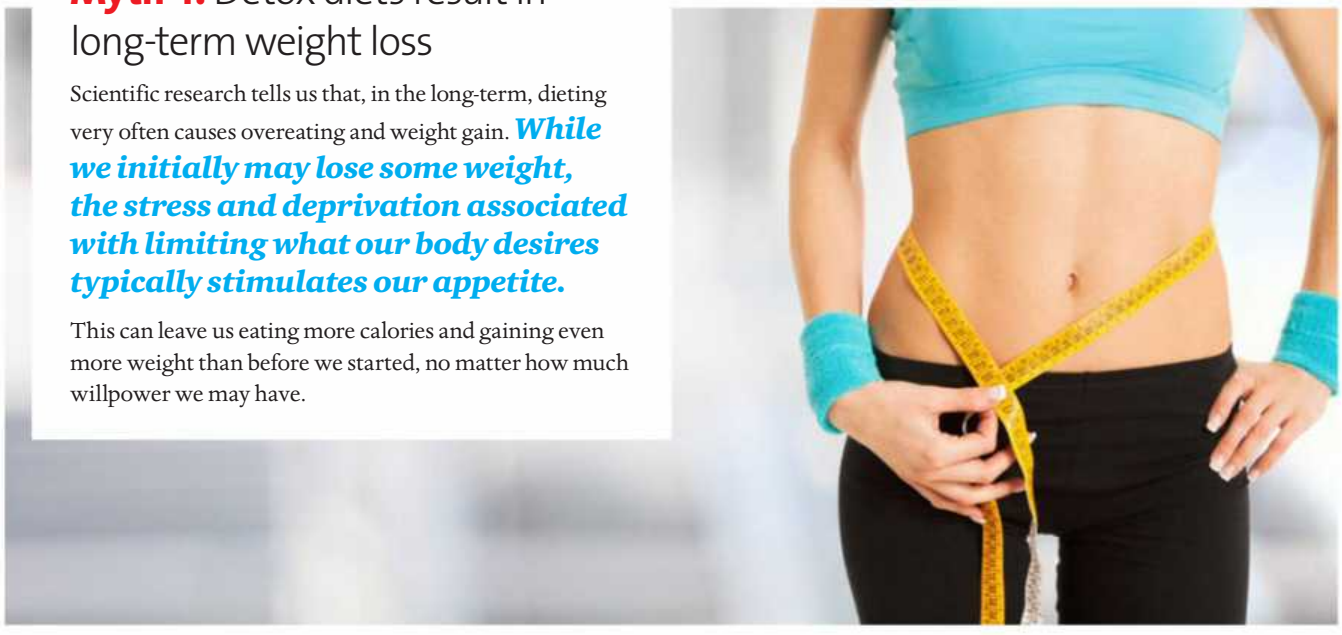


PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Myth 5: You need to take a drastic step to improve your health

Detox diets make you think you have to do something drastic for better health. You don't. Making small changes that stick, can lead to better health over time. This approach also helps us to build the confidence and motivation to continue to make more positive changes into the future.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

A final word

The ultimate diet is certainly not a detox diet. Rather, it is a balanced eating plan that you can stick to over time. The truth is that there are many different ways to healthy eating, but the substantial health benefits that come from changing the foods we eat only arise when these changes are adopted in the long-term.

The good news is that once you find something you can stick with, you no longer have to diet at all!

Three small, but important (and sustainable), changes for eating healthily:

1. **Eat more plant foods:** Minimally processed plant foods such as vegetables, fruits, high-fibre grains, legumes, nuts and seeds are the foundation of any healthy diet. Finding new ways to enjoy these foods more makes eating both healthy and sustainable.

2. **Enjoy all foods:** When we diet, we typically end up craving our favourite foods more. Instead, try saying to yourself "I can have this if I want, but do I really feel like it?" If you truly do, go ahead and enjoy it. The irony of giving ourselves the total freedom to eat what we desire is that with time we end up desiring it less.

3. **Listen to your body, instead of a diet guide:** Too often, we either eat when we aren't hungry, or try to limit our eating when we are. Both of these can lead to overeating and weight gain. Instead, practise tuning into your body, recognising when you are hungry and then eating when you are. If you're not sure, have a drink of water and tune into your body again in 20 minutes time.



TIM CASSETTARI

Tim is a Sydney-based health and wellbeing expert. As an Accredited Practising Dietitian and nutritionist, he is one of Australia's few health and wellness experts who has university studies in nutrition, exercise and psychology. Tim specialises in helping people with not only what they can do to improve their health and wellbeing, but more importantly, how they can make those changes stick. He also writes and speaks regularly about how we can cultivate a life of health and happiness. You can subscribe to his blog for free advice at www.timcassettari.com


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TRIM, TONE AND TIGHTEN

Your guide to training your thighs inside and out

MODEL **NINA SILIC** | PHOTOGRAPHY **DALLAS OLSEN** | HAIR AND MAKE-UP **LISA LEE**

We all want long, strong and toned legs, so we squat, deadlift and lunge.

But in our quest for these amazing legs, many of us forget the little guys who help streamline our shape and give us sleek definition: our inner and outer thighs.

To target the various muscles in these areas, we need to perform movements in different planes that hit muscles from all angles. This gives them the greatest challenge so they can adapt and take a long and lean form.

So what muscles do you need to target in your inner and outer thighs exactly?

The only muscle that's located on the outside of your hip is your tensor fascia lata (TFL), which orientates just underneath your hip bone and feeds into a long tendon that runs down the side of your thigh called the iliotibial (or IT) band. Primarily responsible for hip abduction, i.e. moving the leg away from the body, the TFL is assisted by your glutes to perform movements like squats and lunges. The TFL helps to align your femur correctly and weaknesses here will make both your hip and knee unstable, which could lead to injuries – you certainly don't want that!

Your inner thigh is composed of three main muscles: the adductor magnus, the adductor longus and the gracilis. These three originate in the pelvic area and run down toward your knee along the inside of your thigh. They works as a unit to perform hip adduction, i.e. moving your leg inwards, and help stabilise the hip when you're walking and running.

Your inner and outer thighs are rarely the primary movers in an exercise, so you have to tweak your moves a little to best target them. Moving laterally, i.e. side to side, is a sure-fire way to hit them, as well as changing the leg and foot positions of the standard lift, such as turning your feet out for a sumo squat.

Now that you know exactly which muscles you need to be working, let's get to the workout!

The Workout

EXERCISE	REPS	SETS
Sumo squat	8-12	3
Curtsey lunge	8-12 each side	3
Crossover step-up	8-12 each side	3
Band walks	8-12 each direction	3
Lateral switch jumps	16-20 reps or 30-45 seconds	3
Stability ball double-leg raise	8-12 each side	3



Sumo Squat

Set-up: Holding a heavy dumbbell in front of you with both hands, step your feet roughly double your shoulder-width apart. Keep your toes turned out between 45-90 degrees.

Action: Drop your hips straight down, lowering until your upper thighs are parallel with the floor. Ensure your spine is kept neutral and your knees are directly above your ankles. Once at the bottom, squeeze your glutes and return to the start position.



Tip: Try not to press your hips backward, as you would in a standard squat. Rather, keep your torso upright throughout the movement and press your thighs outward maintaining knee alignment.



Curtsey Lunge

Set-up: Standing with your feet hip-width apart, hold a dumbbell in each of your hands and keep your arm by your sides.

Action: Step the non-working leg backwards and sidewards towards the working leg, so that you are in a curtsey position. Keep your hips square and maintain an upright torso and neutral spine as you lower down. Drive through the working heel and hip, and step your non-working foot back to the start. Complete all reps on one side before switching sides.

Tip: If flexibility isn't one of your strong points and you're unable to move the leg across the body, direct it backwards at 45 degrees to activate the abductors on the working hip.

Band Walks

Set-up: Secure a medium-resistance band around your ankles and stand in a quarter-squat position. Your feet should be a little w der than shoulder-width apart, toes forward or slightly turned out.

Action: Step to one side and bend your knees into a squat position, keeping your torso stable. Repeat in the same direction to complete the reps and then reverse directions to target the opposite leg.



Tip: Stand as upright as possible throughout the movement. If you lean, you will be using momentum to stretch the band instead of challenging your muscles. You can also try moving the band over your thighs or going forward and backwards at a 45-degree angle to switch it up.

Lateral Switch Jumps

Set-up: Stand with your feet hip-width apart, arms at your sides and bend your knees slightly in a ready position.

Action: Hop and extend one leg out to the side, landing on the opposite foot and bending your knee deeply. Touch the foot with your fingers while keeping your back flat. Quickly extend your leg and jump up in the air, landing on the other foot and extending your leg out to the other side. Continue, alternating sides, at a smooth, even pace.

Tip: Always land softly, bending your knees and hips so your muscles – not your joints – absorb the shock.



Stability Ball Double-Leg Raise

Set-up: Lie on your side with your head cradled on your arm and your body forming a straight line from your shoulders to your ankles. Hold a stability ball between your ankles and squeeze your legs together to keep it in place.

Action: Keeping hold of the ball and squeezing your inner and outer thighs, lift the ball off the ground. Only lift as high as you can go while remaining stable. Slowly lower down and repeat for reps before swapping sides.



Crossover Step-Up

Set-up: Stand slightly behind a knee-height bench with a dumbbell in each hand.

Action: Step your outside leg over and in front, to place it firmly on the bench. As you keep your toes pointing forwards and your knee aligned over your foot, drive through the hip to step up onto the bench. Then step down with your other foot. Continue, alternating sides.



Tip: Do this move in front of a mirror so that you can watch your knee closely. If it starts to cave in or out, practise the step until you can maintain knee alignment.

Tip: You should remain stable for the duration of the movement. Don't rock forwards or backwards. If you do, slow down the movement and really focus on balancing and stabilising.



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Christmas is the perfect time to give your friends, family or even yourself a gift that will keep on giving. *Oxygen* has found the best 12 deals for you and your loved ones to be on your merry (and fit) way this Christmas. With health- and fitness-related gifts, you can all start 2016 inspired, empowered and ready to go after your biggest goals.



7 BALANCE YOUR LIFESTYLE

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8 GIFT FOR HIM – SWEATY SKIN SAVIOUR

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9 RELIEVE AND RECOVER

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HOW TO **STOP STRESS** FROM RUINING YOUR HEALTH

Say Goodbye to Toxic Stress

BY **DR CRIS BEER**



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Stress is toxic to our bodies. So toxic, in fact, that it poisons your body and mind to the point where you can be totally incapacitated.

Worst of all, the effects of stress seem to creep up on you and leave you feeling worn out, depressed, anxious and overweight. In essence, stress can kill you softly.

It has been estimated that 60-80 per cent of the reasons people see a GP are related to stress. Such conditions include fatigue, headaches, inability to lose weight, mental-health issues, insomnia, digestive issues, muscle tension, difficulties conceiving, recurrent infections, and even high blood pressure, heart disease and cancer.

These health effects can take some time to recover from, depending on how long you have been stressed and the type of stress you have been experiencing.

To illustrate how debilitating stress can be to your health I recall a patient who came to see me due to unrelenting fatigue despite getting a good night's sleep. She was a busy working mum with three children. She ran her own business and tried to keep fit by running three times per week. Despite the exercise, she found she was unable to lose any weight and, in fact, was gaining weight steadily. She also found that her moods had changed – she was becoming more pessimistic and irritable. She often tossed and turned at night time and would wake up predictably between 1-3am. Despite eating fairly healthily most of the time, her biggest weaknesses were caffeine and chocolate. She would drink on average three to four cups of coffee per day to stay awake and eat chocolate every night due to her sugar cravings.

When she looked in the mirror she reported to me that she no longer recognised who she was. To add insult to injury, people often told her she looked tired. So she came to see me in a desperate state of not knowing what was wrong. We discovered that her health was suffering under the effects of chronic stress.

"60 to 80 per cent of the reasons people see a GP are related to stress."

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



GOOD STRESS

It is important to realise that not all stress is bad. Some stress is actually good for you and helps to keep life interesting. Good stress is also called 'eustress'. We need just the right amount of stress to keep us motivated and challenged. Too little stress and we become apathetic and bored. But too much stress and that is where our health starts to suffer the consequences. The worst two types of stress are repeated stress and chronic stress. So what exactly are these and how do you avoid them from becoming toxic in your life?

HEALTH TIP: To halt the stress response, stop and take 10 slow, deep breaths. Repeat this several times a day and before sleep at night.

REPEATED STRESS AND HOW YOU CAN REDUCE ITS EFFECTS

Repeated stress affects you on a frequent and recurrent basis. Common examples of things that can make you stressed include:

- Traffic
- Paying Bills
- Noise
- Crowds
- Sleep disturbance
- Isolation
- Loneliness
- Hunger
- Danger

This type of stress can be overcome by practising stress-reduction techniques such as taking 10 deep breaths, meditation, mindfulness and regular, relaxing exercise such as yoga and/or Pilates. These types of activities activate our parasympathetic nervous system – which is literally our 'de-stress' nervous system. Practice makes perfect when it comes to winding down the stress response - so try incorporating these stress-reducing activities daily.

But by far the worst type of stress is chronic stress.

CHRONIC STRESS AND HOW YOU CAN STOP IT RUINING YOUR HEALTH

Chronic stress is a significant health-destroying component of modern lifestyles. It literally drains your energy, speeds up ageing, lowers your mood and steals your health. So what is chronic stress?

When compared with repeated stress, which affects us on a regular basis but does ease off at some point, chronic stress is stress that does not seem to go away. It is the type of stress that happens, for example, when we are having relationship troubles, or not enjoying our job, or when we have a baby; when we are constantly worried about an issue in our lives, when we have suffered an injury or chronic illness, or even as a result of not sleeping well. The cause of chronic stress in our lives may be obvious or it may be subtle, but it has to be present consistently for at least three to four weeks to be classified as 'chronic'.

When this occurs our stress hormones start to rise, in particular adrenalin and cortisol. Other hormones start to drop such as our sex hormones progesterone and testosterone, our happy hormone serotonin, and our metabolism-boosting thyroid hormones. There are some predictable and potentially debilitating symptoms that occur when there is this chronic change to our hormone levels, as outlined in the table below.

HIGH ADRENALIN	HIGH CORTISOL	LOW PROGESTERONE (WOMEN)	LOW THYROID HORMONES	LOW SEROTONIN	LOW TESTOSTERONE (WOMEN & MEN)
• Increased blood pressure	• Increased blood sugar	• Menstrual period problems	• Slowed metabolism	• Depression	• Reduced sex drive
• Racing heartbeat	• Increased cholesterol	• Infertility	• Tiredness	• Anxiety	• Reduced muscle repair
• Breathlessness	• Increased tummy fat	• Mood swings	• Hair loss	• Insomnia (particularly waking between 1-3am)	
• Anxiety	• Sugar & salt cravings	• PMS	• Dry skin		
• Panic attacks	• Fluid retention	• Impaired memory	• Dry hair		
• Stomach pains	• Reduced immunity	• Worsened symptoms of polycystic ovaries, fibroids and endometriosis			
• Nausea					
• Excessive sweating					
• Dry mouth					

HEALTH FACT: If you are constantly feeling tired you may be suffering from a condition known as adrenal fatigue – this is a state of body burn-out.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

SO HOW DO YOU STOP CHRONIC STRESS FROM RUINING YOUR HEALTH?

The first thing to recognise is the major stress producers in your life. Make a list of these from 'most stressful' to 'least stressful'. Work on the top two most stressful first. Aim to see if there is anything about those situations that you can change, even if it involves counselling to change your perspective about the situation. Realise too that you can actually be addicted to stress. Learn to recognise when your life has gone from one drama to the next. Is there something in your life and personality that is attracting this type of chronic stress? This may be part of a deeper psychological condition that has roots in your upbringing or past and may need to be further addressed in the form of counselling.

Other techniques for reducing chronic stress include getting a good night's sleep, having regular 'time-outs' from your busy schedule, doing regular exercise, laughing daily, reducing caffeine and alcohol, forgiving others, developing positive relationships and meditating regularly.

When you have been stressed for a long period of time - either constantly or repeatedly - you can develop a condition known as adrenal fatigue.

HOW TO RECOGNISE ADRENAL FATIGUE

Ever felt absolutely exhausted for days, weeks, months or even years on end despite getting enough sleep? You may be suffering from adrenal fatigue. Adrenal fatigue occurs when we have been very stressed for a long period of time. When this happens we deplete our hormone levels to such a point that we are in a state of burn-out. Our adrenal glands are responsible for making stress hormones like cortisol, adrenalin and noradrenalin. These hormones are responsible for keeping us motivated, maximising our energy levels and allowing us to stay alert and active. What can happen over time, however, is that by constantly running on high stress levels we deplete these hormones.

So what are the symptoms of depleted stress hormones and therefore adrenal fatigue?

- ☐ Constant fatigue
- ☐ Feeling of weakness
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Poor concentration
- ☐ Looking tired
- ☐ Irritability, depression and/or anxiety
- ☐ Stomach pains
- ☐ Joint and/or muscle pains
- ☐ Inability to lose weight and/or weight gain
- ☐ Sugar cravings

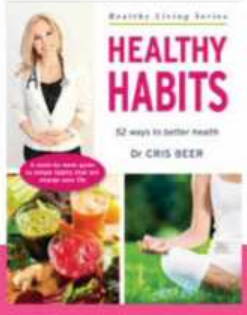
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"Recognise our own limits when it comes to work and social activities."

These symptoms can be subtle or can be severe and constant. So how do we reverse this process and return our stress hormone levels to normal?

- ☐ **Realise that it will take time.** It takes about six to 18 months to deplete our stress hormone levels and so it may take about this long to replenish them.
- ☐ **Recognise our own limits** when it comes to work and social activities.
- ☐ **Make time** to truly rest and recover.
- ☐ **Clean up your diet** by avoiding sugar, salt and fatty foods and eating mainly fresh, unprocessed foods.
- ☐ **Eat small, regular meals** every two to three hours to keep blood sugar levels stable.
- ☐ **Reduce caffeine intake**, which will only deplete stress hormones further.
- ☐ **Avoid overtraining with exercise**, which can worsen the situation. Learn to listen to your body when it comes to exercise. Gentle exercise such as yoga, Pilates and walking can be just as effective.
- ☐ **Seek professional help** when things aren't improving. Adrenal fatigue and the hormone imbalances that go along with this condition can be detected with some simple testing, including blood tests and salivary hormone testing. Depending on our symptoms and test results, our bodies may be in need of some additional support either with nutritional supplements or medications. Your health practitioner will be able to guide you in what you may need to help support your body.



This article is an extract from Dr Cris Beer's Healthy Habits – a week-by-week guide to 52 simple habits that will change your life. It has been edited for publishing purposes. The book can be purchased from **www.drcris.com.au**

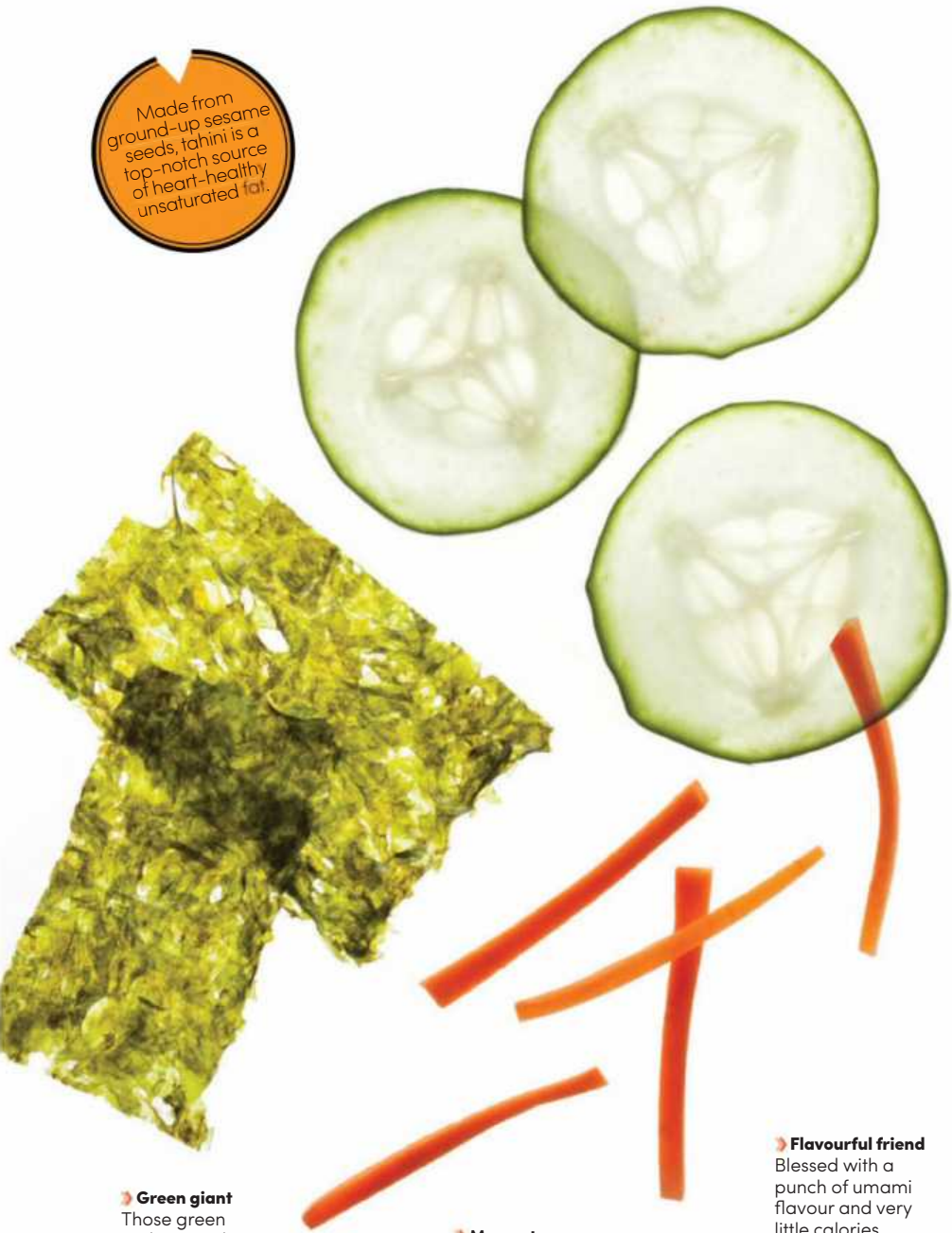


DR CRIS BEER

Dr Cris Beer is a medical doctor, health consultant, corporate speaker and specialist in nutritional medicine. She specialises not just in the prevention and treatment of illnesses, but in the attaining of optimum health. She believes a person can develop resistance to illnesses that plague our society today including premature ageing, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, emotional and mental health problems, as well hormonal problems. By employing simple strategies, Dr Cris believes that a restoration of health and vitality can be achieved.

Health on a roll

Grab hold of these nori rolls to turn your snack time into a nutritional gold mine. **By Matthew Kadey, MS, RD**



Made from ground-up sesame seeds, tahini is a top-notch source of heart-healthy unsaturated fat.

Green giant
Those green soybeans otherwise known as edamame are a nutritional treasure trove — loaded with protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Mango tango
The tropical fruit is laced with vitamin C, an antioxidant shown to improve mood and help fend off diabetes.

Flavourful friend
Blessed with a punch of umami flavour and very little calories, sheets of nori are good for much more than sushi.



These rolls have it all: great crunch, a flavourful riff on hummus and a creamy mix of protein, healthy fats and fibre. The recipe can be prepared up to four days in advance if chilled, but the rolls are best prepared just before serving.

NORI ROLLS
Ready in 30 minutes
Makes 4 servings

- 2 teaspoons wasabi powder
- 2 cups frozen shelled edamame
- ¼ cup tahini
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- juice of ½ lime
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup water
- 8 nori sheets
- 1 mango, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 large carrot, cut into matchsticks
- ½ English cucumber, cut into matchsticks
- ⅓ cup fresh mint

1. In a small bowl, whisk together wasabi powder and 2 teaspoons cold water. Cover and chill for 15 minutes. **2.** Prepare edamame according to package directions. Place wasabi paste, edamame, tahini, garlic, lime zest, lime juice and salt in a food processor container and blend. With the machine running, slowly pour in the water. **3.** Lay a nori sheet on a cutting board. Spread about ¼ cup edamame hummus onto the sheet, leaving at least 25mm uncovered at the top. At the bottom edge, lay on some mango, carrot, cucumber and mint. Fold nori sheet over the filling, and roll it away from you as tightly as possible. Moisten the top edge of the sheet with water to seal. Slice each roll in half to serve. O

Nutrition facts (per serving): calories 286, fat 15 g, carbs 27 g, fibre 11 g, protein 11 g

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WHO'S GOT *your back?*

BY **GREG DOLMAN**

EVERYONE THESE DAYS SEEMS TO HAVE A BAD BACK, BUT WHAT HAS THE BACK DONE TO BE SO 'BAD'?

When it comes to backs, we've all had experience with, or know someone who has had an issue with back soreness. The 'back industry' is a multi-million dollar one in which entire businesses are built on selling numerous devices designed to help protect the back or decrease back pain. These businesses thrive on people who just want to be free from any form of pain in their back.

'Bad backs' are also a major reason for people taking time off work and play, because they just can't function properly in their day-to-day activities without some form of back pain.

I use the term 'bad back' loosely, mainly because my question always is "what has the back done to be so bad?" I hear on an almost daily basis that people have a bad back, or they can't do what they used to any more because of their bad back.

There are many reasons a person's back may not feel as good, or great, as it should or it used to be. Whether it is from a sudden jolt caused by an accident, a sports injury, a work-related injury, or even a gym exercise injury, to name a few. Whatever the cause of the injury, the back hasn't done anything to be labelled 'bad'.

Excluding an accident and/or structural abnormalities, the possible causes of a back injury generally come from a muscle imbalance within the body's biomechanical structure.

From my experience, there are a few reasons muscle imbalances appear in our physiques. Some can be caused by repetitive movements, eg people who are

- ☐ Sitting for long periods of time
- ☐ Tradespeople
- ☐ Doing the same movements or exercises for an extended period
- ☐ Dehydrated and/or
- ☐ Emotional.

So, let's have a look at each of these points to ascertain their role in having a 'bad back'.

1. Sitting for long periods

Whether you have an office job, drive a vehicle, operate heavy machinery or are just a lounge lizard, sitting for extended periods of time has a very negative effect on the muscle groups related to the spine.

In a sitting position, our hip and knee joints are (generally) at 90-degree angles. From the lower legs moving up, our calves slightly shorten (partially contracted); then the hamstrings and hip flexor muscles are shorter again. When we stand up, the shorter muscles will naturally start to have a pulling effect on those joints in a negative way. The end result of this is pressure (or pulling) on the lower back. For some, this pain is a temporary thing until they get moving and their muscle length returns to its normal length. For others, the pain or stiffness doesn't shift much at all due to the fact that the shorter muscle groups are in their normal length. When these muscle groups are needed to stretch in order for the walking process to be done, muscle tightness is experienced.

Either way, it is essential that the shorter muscle groups are stretched and lengthened and the longer, weaker muscles need to be strengthened - which will be the start of bringing equilibrium to all the necessary joints, in turn releasing lower back pressure.

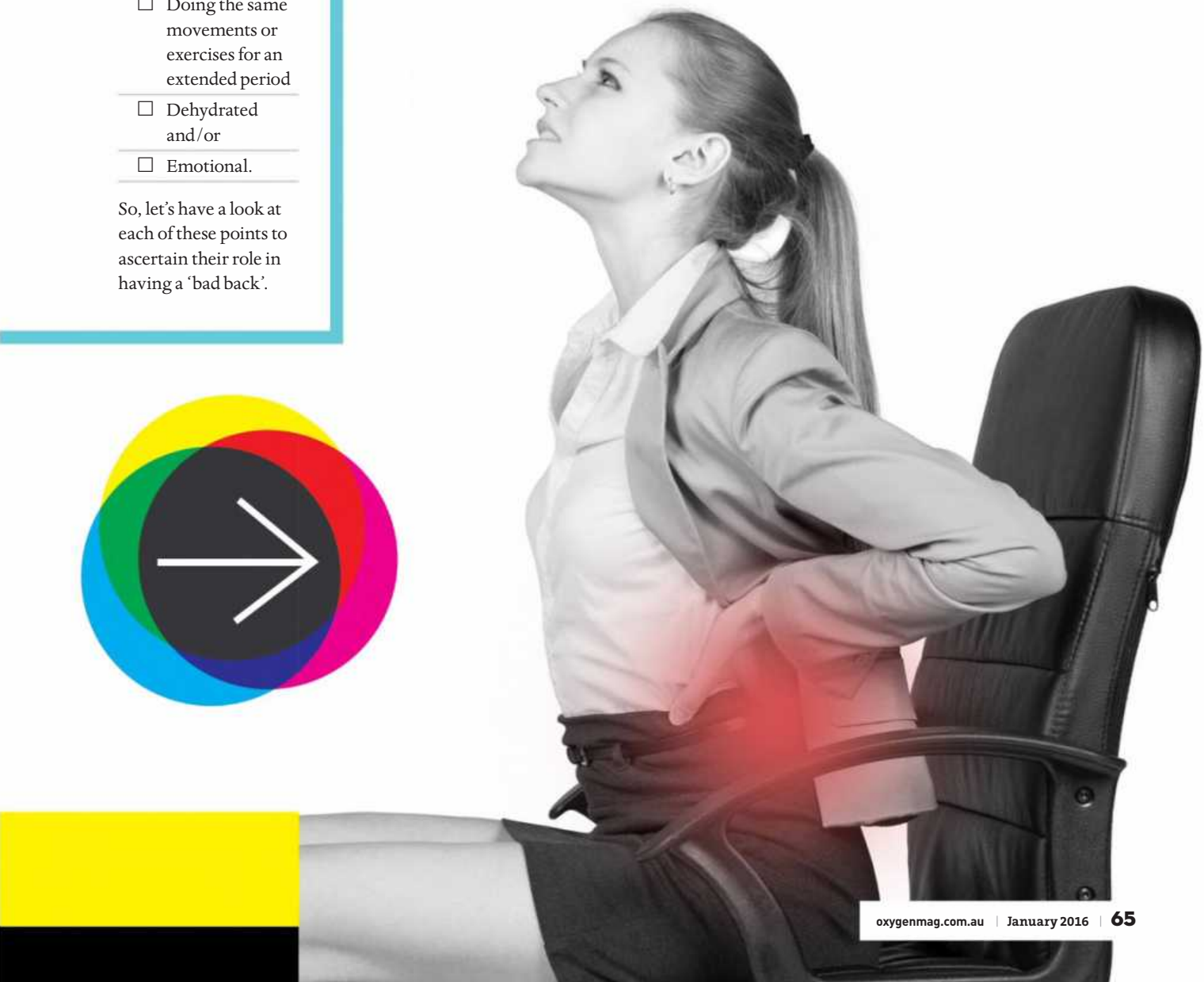


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2. Tradespeople

Tradies tend to be very active out in the field, however, they tend to be very dominant in one side of their body due to the one-sided work they do. For example, using a hammer, electric tools, digging, and carrying a load, all have a marked effect on the postural muscles of the spine.

When we constantly use the right side of our body for carrying a load, we are using the left side of the body to stabilise for balance. Over a period of time, the left side postural muscles of the back start to become dominant from the demand placed on them.

On the other side of the posture, the right side back muscles become slightly weaker as they don't have the same load demand placed on them.

Therefore, with the imbalance exposed, it is only a matter of time before some form of back ache starts to appear, if not an injury from the imbalance.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

3. Doing the same movements or exercises

As in the above example, if we have a muscle imbalance from our day job, then this will start to appear possibly worse from doing the same form of exercises for too long.

Bilateral training (both hands) can potentially have a negative effect on the postural muscles more so than unilateral training (one-sided) if the exerciser is not conscious of the stronger dominant side working slightly harder than the weaker, less dominant side. Bilateral training can possibly add to the uneven load that the spine may already be under.

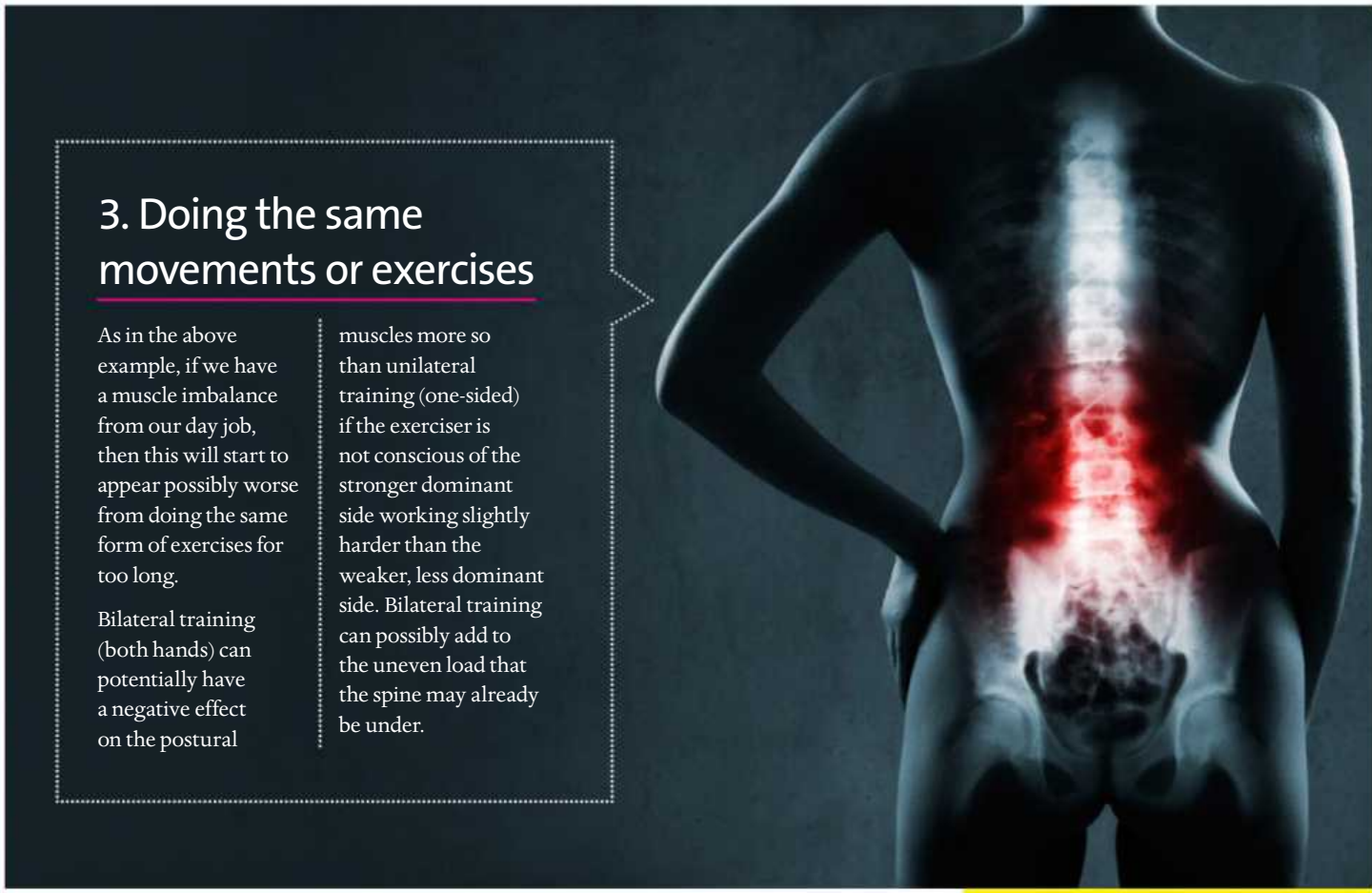


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4. Dehydration

Dehydration is far too common and is usually 90 per cent of the reason a muscle will start to not function as it is supposed to. I know from personal experience that some body aches have dissipated after drinking my required quantity of water within a short time of noticing pain.

Those who exercise, or put the body under a state of water loss due to sweat and/or overheating, need to have sufficient water to remain fully hydrated.

Our body is made up of 80-90 per cent water. The two most important things we need to survive on are air and water! Air we have no choice with, as our body undergoes an involuntary action to breathe for our survival. However, with water we have a choice of how much we drink, or don't drink, and what we take in - which we think is actually better than water. From cordials, soft drinks, performance drinks, coffee and alcohol, we all make different choices every day as to what will best quench our thirst, and for many of us, these choices lead to dehydration.

In general we need to consume about two litres of water a day. However if you're someone who does some serious sweating, such as strenuous daily workouts, then use the rule that for every 10 kilograms of body weight you need to take in 500ml of water. For example, if you weigh 60 kilograms, then you would need to be drinking three litres of water a day.



5. Emotion

How much of an effect emotion may have on our body is one (from my experience) that is very often overlooked as a possible contributing factor to bodily aches and pains.

Muscle tension and spasm can cause many cases of chronic back pain. But what causes this pain if we haven't had an accident, or have a structural abnormality? Could emotional tension have some involvement? From my experience - personally and with clients - the answer is yes.

For a real short lesson in how instant a certain emotion can affect the body, all we have to do is wear a heart rate monitor and observe the fluctuations as we think of both good and bad personal experiences. Think of a situation that caused anger, and watch the heart rate increase. On the other hand, think the opposite situation and watch the heart rate decrease… it's an instantaneous response!

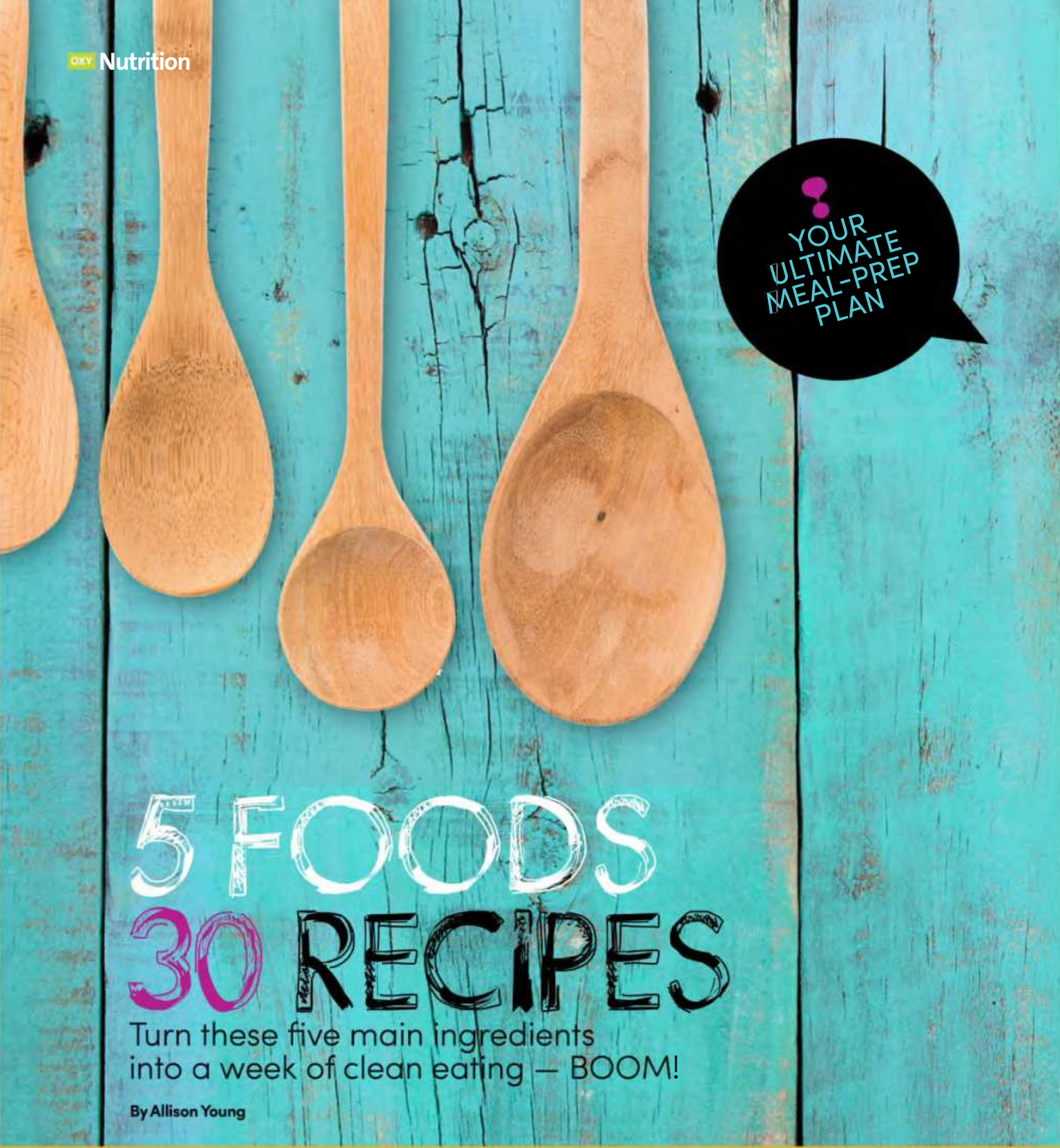
So, if we have a history of the examples above, and keep 'pushing those unwanted emotions back' then it will only be a matter of time before the emotionally suppressed load starts to manifest in the soft tissues of our body. It is the 'pushing back' of the unwanted emotions that later surfaces in our back.

Any thoughts of feeling unsupported - either by self, financially, or in a relationship - will affect our spine in one way, shape, or form.

Sometimes, just by changing the perception of the situation, the level of pain changes.



In summary, if we can identify how much we are actually causing our back to ache, then we can start to do something to decrease or possibly remove the pain all together. This will then open new possibilities for us on many levels – plus, you can then have your own back!



YOUR ULTIMATE MEAL-PREP PLAN

5 FOODS 30 RECIPES

Turn these five main ingredients into a week of clean eating — BOOM!

By Allison Young

Talk to enough fitness pros and a common message emerges: the key to eating for a lean physique is fixing food in advance. But even if you know that meal prep makes healthy eating as easy as hitting the drive-thru, the "whats" and "how-tos" might hold you back. Until now. We got seriously busy in the kitchen and dirtied every pot and pan to deliver the ultimate food-prep guide ... because sometimes you just need someone to hold your hand through it. The result: fresh, fun and healthy no-stress meals all week long!



BAKED SWEET POTATOES

hands-on time: 2 minutes
total time: 45 minutes

The nutrient-packed spuds can sweeten soups, salads and even pizza. "Sweet potatoes are a complex carb that can make a great pre-workout snack or included in a post-recovery meal," says Rebecca Scritchfield, RDN, a registered dietitian in Washington, D.C. In addition to containing loads of fibre for digestive health and potassium to reduce bloating, the orange tubers are a surprising source of vitamin C and a super source of vitamin A — we're talking four times your daily needs in just one tater!

PREP IT!

(4 medium sweet potatoes)

The oven method is long but foolproof: preheat oven to 190 degrees. Scrub potatoes well, wrap in foil, prick several times with a fork and bake about 45 minutes, until tender. Or pierce and nuke on high about six minutes, flipping halfway through.



EAT IT!

- **Sweet potato smoothie** Almond milk + frozen banana + sweet potato + ground cinnamon
- **Sweet potato quinoa salad** Chopped sweet potato + quinoa + rocket + hard-boiled eggs + sunflower seeds
- **Sweet potato pizza** Top a flatbread with olive oil + thinly sliced sweet potato + caramelised onion + kale + crumbled feta, bake 15 minutes at 190 degrees.
- **Sweet potato hummus** Sweet potato + canned or cooked chickpeas + garlic + lemon juice + olive oil + sea salt
- **Mexican-style sweet potatoes** Baked sweet potatoes topped with black beans + corn kernels + diced red capsicum + pulled pork + salsa
- **Spicy sweet potatoes** Mash together sweet potatoes + canned chipotle chilli in adobo sauce + salt + pepper

HARD-BOILED EGGS

hands-on time: 1 minute
total time: 15 minutes

More than a breakfast bite, eggs really are incredible: boil a dozen at a time and you have an instant protein source to throw into salads, sandwiches or even your gym bag. "Eggs are a great source of protein and the amino acid leucine, which helps stimulate protein digestion and speed up muscle recovery," Scritchfield says. Plus, the yolks are loaded with B vitamins to convert carbs into energy and vitamin D for bone health.

PREP IT!
(12 eggs)
Making the perfect hard-boiled egg is easy: place eggs in a large saucepan, cover with water by 25mm and bring water to a boil. Cover and remove from heat and let sit 12 minutes. Refrigerate in the shell for up to a week.

EAT IT!

- **Avocado toast**
Whole-wheat toast topped with avocado + sliced hard-boiled egg + paprika

- **Egg muffin**
Whole-wheat English muffin + sliced hard-boiled eggs + deli turkey + spinach

- **California Cobb salad**
Chopped cos lettuce + chopped hard-boiled eggs + diced avocado + halved cherry tomatoes + chopped chicken breast

- **Potato salad**
Cooked and cubed red potatoes + halved hard-boiled eggs + fresh parsley + fresh dill + vinaigrette

- **Curried egg salad**
Mashed hard-boiled eggs + plain Greek yoghurt + mustard + chopped chives + chopped capsicum + curry powder

- **Green eggs**
Sauteed greens + garlic topped with sliced hard-boiled eggs

STEEL-CUT OATS

hands-on time: 1 minute
total time: 30 minutes

When it comes to priming your muscles for a workout, steel-cut oats are where it's at. "They contain carbohydrates that are digested more slowly to help supply a sustained source of energy to help fuel your training," says Melina Jampolis, M.D., author of *The Doctor on Demand Diet* (Bird Street Books, 2015). The hearty whole grain also contains manganese for strong bones and healthy connective tissue and plenty of protein: 7 grams per ¼-cup serving. Bonus: the minimally processed oats can be made either sweet and savoury and get creamier, not clumpier, when reheated.

PREP IT!
(1-2 cups dry steel-cut oats)
Speed up your stove-cooking time by pre-soaking the oats overnight: before bed, pour 4 cups boiling water over 1 cup dry oats, and the next morning, simmer until cooked through. Even easier is the rice cooker: combine 1 cup dry oats with 2½ cups water, press the button and walk away. Store covered in the fridge for up to five days or freeze.

EAT IT!

- **Chia pudding**
Chia seeds + steel-cut oats + vanilla yoghurt + mashed banana (let sit 30 minutes before serving.)

- **Savoury breakfast bowl**
Steel-cut oats + turkey bacon + sliced hard-boiled egg

- **Mushroom soup**
Steel-cut oats + mushrooms + chopped leeks + vegetable broth

- **Protein bowl**
Steel-cut oats + shelled edamame + shredded chicken + grated carrots + chopped peanuts

- **Steel-cut tabbouleh**
Steel-cut oats + chopped red capsicum + diced Persian cucumbers + chopped parsley + lemon juice + olive oil

- **Steel-cut biscuit dough**
Steel-cut oats + peanut butter + honey + chocolate chips

PULLED PORK SHOULDER

hands-on time: 5 minutes
total time: 8-10 hours

Fatty bacon gives pork a bum rap, but a 85 gram serving of pork shoulder has 19 grams of protein (wowsa!) and only 3 grams of fat, plus plenty of B vitamins. "It's a very lean meat option that's easier on the digestive tract after a long gruelling workout," Scritchfield says. It's also a good source of iron, something active women are often lacking, Jampolis adds. And despite being synonymous with sandwiches, pulled pork stretches into dozens of meals.

PREP IT!
(3-4 weight pork shoulder)
The slow cooker effortlessly produces fall-off-the-bone pork. Trim fat and combine pork shoulder, 1 cup water plus a squirt of ketchup and a drizzle of molasses in a slow cooker, cover and cook on low eight to 10 hours until pork shreds easily with a fork. Store in the fridge for up to five days; it also freezes brilliantly.

EAT IT!

- **Pulled pork hash**
Pulled pork + diced onions + diced sweet potato + diced capsicum

- **Pulled pork breakfast burrito**
Pulled pork + chopped hard-boiled egg + salsa wrapped in a whole-wheat tortilla

- **Pulled pork chilli**
Pulled pork + white beans + canned diced fire-roasted tomatoes + chilli powder + touch of molasses

- **Pulled pork peach salad**
Pulled pork + mixed greens + chopped peaches + red onion + sliced almonds

- **Pulled pork lettuce wraps**
Green leaf or butter lettuce topped with pulled pork + shredded red cabbage + sesame seeds + fresh coriander + Sriracha

- **Pulled pork shepherd's pie**
Layer pulled pork + peas + corn kernels + mashed sweet potato + shredded cheddar, bake 25 minutes at 200 degrees





HOMEMADE PESTO

hands-on time: 5 minutes
total time: 5 minutes

Easy-to-make pesto is a simple way to add a flavour punch to sandwiches, salads and veggies — all while getting your greens and healthy fats. "Basil and garlic are terrific sources of disease-fighting phytonutrients, and pine nuts provide magnesium for heart health, bone health and blood sugar control," Jampolis says. Pine nuts also could curb your appetite by increasing the release of satiety hormones. Plus, pesto is chock-full of antioxidants to strengthen your immune system and your brain.

PREP IT!
(pesto)
One food processor, five ingredients and bam, you have a brag-worthy sauce: add 6 cups fresh basil, ½ cup pine nuts, 2 cloves garlic and ¼ cup grated Parmesan and pulse to chop finely. Scrape down the sides and stream in ¼ to ½ cup olive oil with the blender running — and presto pesto!

EAT IT!

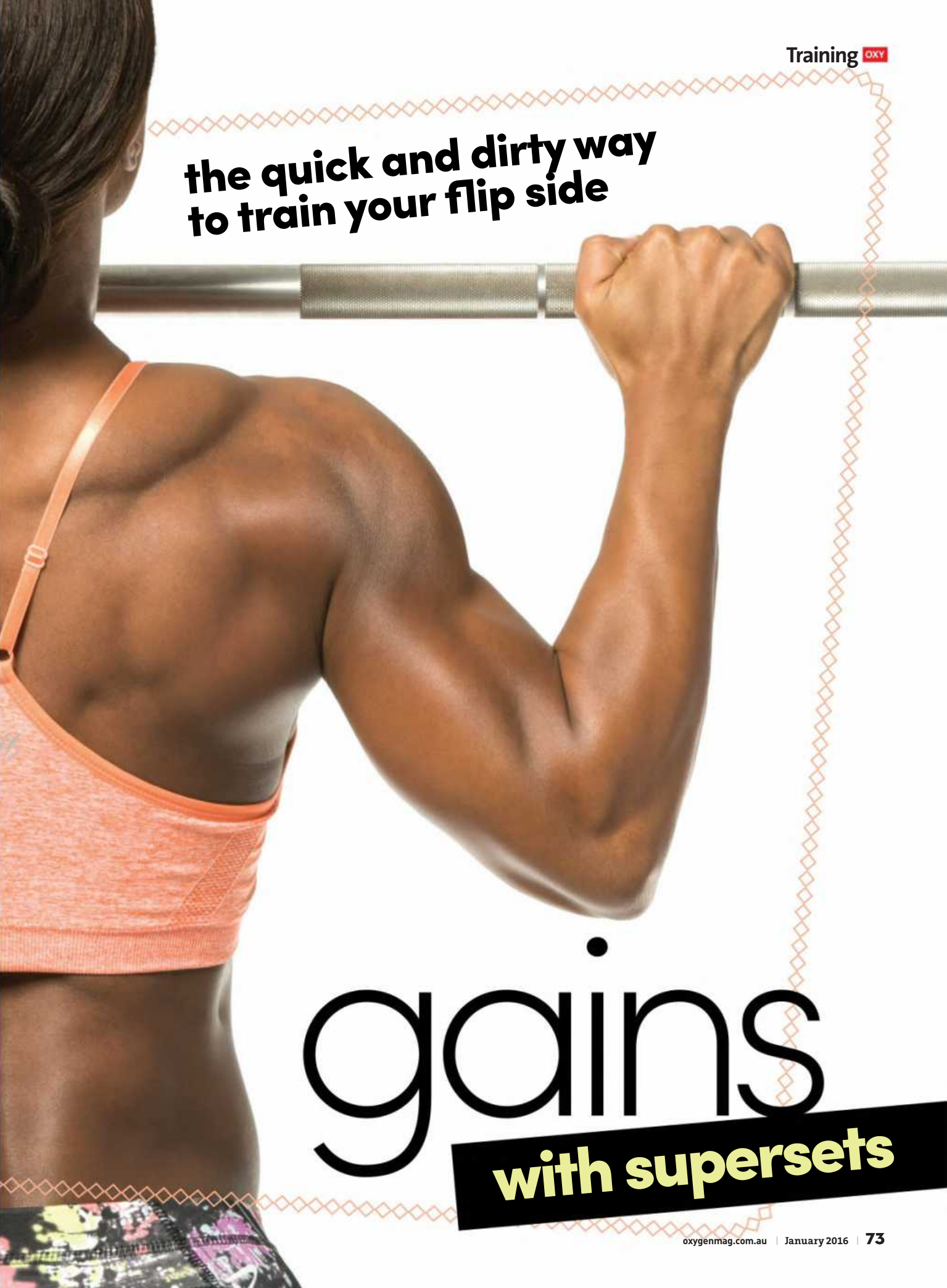
- **Pesto omelette**
 2 eggs + pesto + halved cherry tomatoes
- **Pesto chicken salad**
 Shredded chicken breast + diced celery + diced red onion + walnuts + pesto + lemon juice
- **Creamy pesto dip**
 Pesto + Greek yoghurt
- **Quinoa pesto salad**
 Cooked quinoa + blanched broccoli + pesto + sunflower seeds
- **Pesto chicken soup**
 Shredded chicken + diced carrots + canned chickpeas + chicken stock + pesto
- **Pesto salmon**
 Rub salmon fillets with pesto, bake at 200 degrees for 20 minutes or until cooked through

by Lara McGlashan, MFA, CPT, Fitness Editor • photography by Robert Reiff



super

the quick and dirty way to train your flip side



gains with supersets

Second only to legs, your back probably takes the most out of you when it comes to training. But unfortunately, you don't always have tons of time to dedicate to working this massive muscle group, and you need to get in, get out and get on with your life. In those instances, supersets are your best bet, and this workout packs six moves and 13 sets into a turbo-charged 30-minutes-or-less format.

Warm up for five to 10 minutes with some light cardio and dynamic stretching that focuses on the shoulders, upper back, lower back, hips and neck, then begin your first superset. Do the superset moves back-to-back and rest no more than 60 seconds between to fast-track your workout duration and your calorie burn. Use a light to moderate weight for your first superset, then aim for a moderately heavy weight for the rest of the moves. Keep your reps pretty high to increase your time under tension, which boosts muscle development.

	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
1	WIDE-GRIP PULL-UP	5	10
	-SUPERSET WITH-		
	BARBELL GOOD MORNING		10
2	REVERSE-GRIP DUMBBELL ROW	4	15
	-SUPERSET WITH-		
	DUMBBELL STRAIGHT-ARM PULLBACK		15
3	DUMBBELL BENT-ARM PULLOVER	4	15
	-SUPERSET WITH-		
	STABILITY-BALL HYPEREXTENSION		15

MODEL: CANDICE LEWIS • HAIR AND MAKEUP BY FLAWLESS; HAIR BY JAY MANUEL, MAKEUP BY VANESSA RAYE GARZA • FITNESS CLOTHING: MODEL'S OWN

1

BARBELL GOOD MORNING
SET-UP: Balance a barbell across your shoulders and traps and grasp it lightly with both hands. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, shoulders down and back, and focus forward.
MOVE: Moving your upper body as one unit, fold forward with a straight back — hinging at the hips — and lower your torso toward the floor. When you've come nearly parallel or as far as you can, reverse the move and rise to the start.



WIDE-GRIP PULL-UP
SET-UP: Hang from a pull-up bar with your hands spaced wider than your shoulders in an overhand grip. Bend your knees and cross your feet behind you. Look up toward the bar and lift your chest.
MOVE: Retract your shoulder blades, then drive your elbows down and back to lift your chest toward the bar. Pause at the top, then slowly lower to the start under control.

CHANGE YOUR HAND PLACEMENT TO HIT DIFFERENT PARTS OF YOUR BACK. TRY A CLOSE GRIP, UNDERHAND GRIP AND FLIP GRIP (ONE HAND OVER, ONE HAND UNDER).

BEGINNER TIP
If you're not yet proficient with pull-ups, use a pull-up band to assist or enlist a training partner to spot you until you develop more strength.





IF YOU HAVE TIGHT HAMSTRINGS, BEND YOUR KNEES SLIGHTLY TO ALLOW FOR A GREATER RANGE OF MOTION. ALSO, IF YOU HAVE LOWER-BACK PROBLEMS, PERFORM THESE WITH A VERY LIGHT WEIGHT AND MOVE SLOWLY AND DELIBERATELY WITH EACH REPETITION.

EVEN BETTER! To really change things up, superset these two moves using one arm at a time. For example, do all your reverse-grip rows with the right arm, then move right into the dumbbell straight-arm pullbacks with your right arm. Immediately switch sides and continue this way for all four sets to boost intensity and save even more time.



ALTERNATE THESE WEEK TO WEEK WITH A REGULAR DUMBBELL ROW TO HIT YOUR BACK IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

REVERSE-GRIP DUMBBELL ROW
SET-UP: Stand with your feet hip-width apart and hold a set of dumbbells at your sides, palms facing forward. Keeping your back flat, hinge at the hips and fold forward about 45 degrees. Let your arms hang straight down toward the floor with your head neutral.
MOVE: Drive your elbows up and back, keeping your upper arms in close to your sides and pulling the weights in toward your rib cage. At the top, pause and squeeze, then lower to the start.



2

DUMBBELL STRAIGHT-ARM PULLBACK
SET-UP: Stand with your feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent, and hold a dumbbell at your side in an overhand grip. Fold forward from your hips with a flat back and allow your arm to hang straight down toward the floor. Place your opposite hand on your thigh for support.
MOVE: Keeping your arm straight, lift it in an arc alongside your body and up until it is parallel to the floor. Pause at the top, then lower slowly to the start. Do all reps on one side before switching.





KEEP YOUR BACK STRAIGHT AND YOUR SHOULDERS SQUARE THROUGHOUT THIS MOVE TO PROPERLY ISOLATE YOUR BACK MUSCLES.



DUMBBELL BENT-ARM PULLOVER
SET-UP: Lie face-up on a flat bench with your upper back and shoulders fully supported and hold a dumbbell with both hands over your chest, elbows slightly bent.
MOVE: Slowly drop the weight in an arc back over your head toward the floor, keeping your arms in close to your ears and your elbows slightly bent. When your elbows come level with your head, reverse the move and return to the start.



KEEPING YOUR ARMS SLIGHTLY BENT HELPS ALLEVIATE PRESSURE ON YOUR ELBOWS.

3

STABILITY-BALL HYPEREXTENSION
SET-UP: Lie face-down on a stability ball so your hips are supported, and extend your legs behind you with your toes digging into the floor. Place your hands behind your head with your elbows flared.
MOVE: Keeping your back straight, lift your upper body until it comes in line with your legs and pause, squeezing your glutes at the top. Lower slowly to the start and repeat right away.



TO MAKE THIS MOVE MORE CHALLENGING, HOLD A SMALL PLATE WITH YOUR ARMS EXTENDED STRAIGHT OUT BY YOUR HEAD TO CREATE A LONGER LEVER ARM AND AMP THE INTENSITY.

RAY JENSEN

AGE: 33 | HEIGHT: 194cm | WEIGHT: 118kg | HOMETOWN: Melbourne | OCCUPATION: Concrete pump operator and personal trainer



PHOTO CREDIT: NAT V PHOTOGRAPHY

What is your claim to fame?

Three-time premiership captain at the mighty Spotswood Football Club and holding my first Dan black belt in karate.

If you could be anywhere in the world doing anything – what and where would you be?

At our home away from home – up at our holiday house in Echuca, water skiing with my family.

Describe your perfect Sunday.

Heading down to our local beach with my wife and son, grabbing some fish and chips for lunch, and then playing with my son in the park.

How do you stay in shape?

I weight train five days a week, lifting as heavy as I can, with one high-intensity session a week which includes battle ropes, tyre flips and Jacob's ladder.

What's your favourite home-cooked meal?

Lasagne with extra cheese sauce.

What characteristics do you most look for in a woman?

A really fit body, piercing green eyes, great smile and an easy-going personality.

What is the most romantic thing you've ever done for a woman?

The day I proposed to my wife at Sea World with the dolphins. I worked with the trainers for three months prior so they could teach the dolphins to swim the ring up to her – and they did.

Do you have a favourite pick-up line?

Back in the day I may have had a few rippers, but not any more now that I'm happily married to my soulmate.



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IT'S TIME TO EAVESDROP ON **WHAT YOU'RE REALLY SAYING TO YOURSELF.**



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Mind your thoughts

BY **BELINDA POTTER**

HAVE YOU EVER STOPPED TO LISTEN TO THE CONSTANT CHATTER IN YOUR MIND? THAT INNER VOICE, YOUR EGO – SOMETIMES WISE AND INSIGHTFUL, SOMETIMES ENCOURAGING AND STRONG, SOMETIMES IRRATIONAL AND CRUEL. It is humbling to think that we are guided so intrinsically by the 1.3 kilograms of grey matter between our ears. What we are capable of, how we see ourselves and how we believe others perceive us is interpreted through our 'internal processor' – the organ that makes us, well 'us'.

Do you remember about 10 years ago the phenomenon of The Secret? The book has reportedly sold more than 19 million copies worldwide and has been translated into almost 50 languages – that is a pretty lofty accomplishment for author Rhonda Byrne. The basic tenet of the book was that every person has the ability to attract things into their life with their thoughts and intentions; that our energy attracts 'like energy' – both good and bad. This is the Law of Attraction. So, why aren't we all slim, rich and happy if it is just a matter of thinking so? Unfortunately, it's not that easy.

Rick Hansen, author of Hardwiring Happiness, explains that positive thinking isn't all that natural for our cavegirl minds - and creating a positive mindset requires a fairly diligent and concerted effort. He states that our negativity bias is a survival mechanism left over from our ancestors, during a time when it was imperative that we kept our wits about us… or become extinct. Cleverly, he likens our brains to Velcro for the bad and Teflon for the good.

I'm sure that we can all attest to knowing, or being, a 'Negative Nancy' at times – perhaps this is your default position?

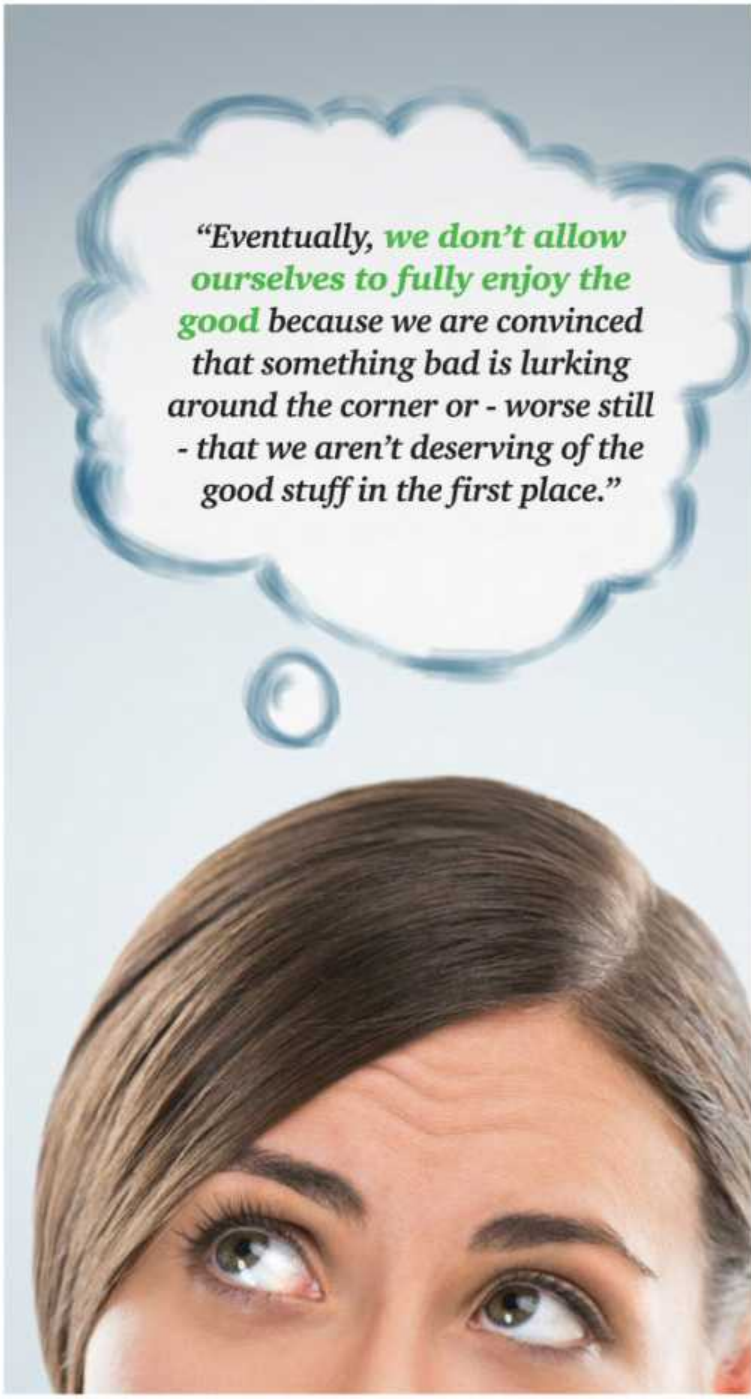
This is too hard. Why do bad things always happen to me? I can never stick to a healthy eating plan. I'm destined to be overweight."



If left unchallenged, our negative thoughts attune us to what is wrong with a situation – or what is wrong with us.

I spy with my grim little eye: Bad. Bad. Bad. Okay, I guess. Bad. Bad.

With enough practice, this pattern of thinking and seeing becomes so ingrained that we form deep grooves in our subconscious. Eventually, we don't allow ourselves to fully enjoy the good because we are convinced that something bad is lurking around the corner or - worse still - that we aren't deserving of the good stuff in the first place.



Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.
MAHATMA GANDHI

So, how do we reprogram our subconscious?

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

DIY Psychology

First, you need to take notice and do a little DIY. When you catch yourself in a moment of overwhelm, hyper-vigilance or negativity, stop and eavesdrop on your internal chatter. Grab yourself a pen and paper and write a running commentary of everything that pops into your head, completely unedited. It may be a good idea to keep a journal to identify the patterns or themes. Once you have it all in black and white, then it's time to come back into BFF mode and challenge those negative beliefs.

What are they? Can you identify the source? Where is the evidence?

Really take the time to analyse those sweeping statements. Always and never, assertions are rarely true. What empowering questions can you ask yourself to make sense of your situation? Hint: Look at the questions below. Let's apply a little Velcro – what are the wins, past accomplishments or praise that you've been given? Write them down, even if they feel boastful – these will help you build confidence.

Questions are at the very core of how we listen, behave, think and relate. Virtually everything we think and do is determined by the questions that we ask.

- Marilee Adams

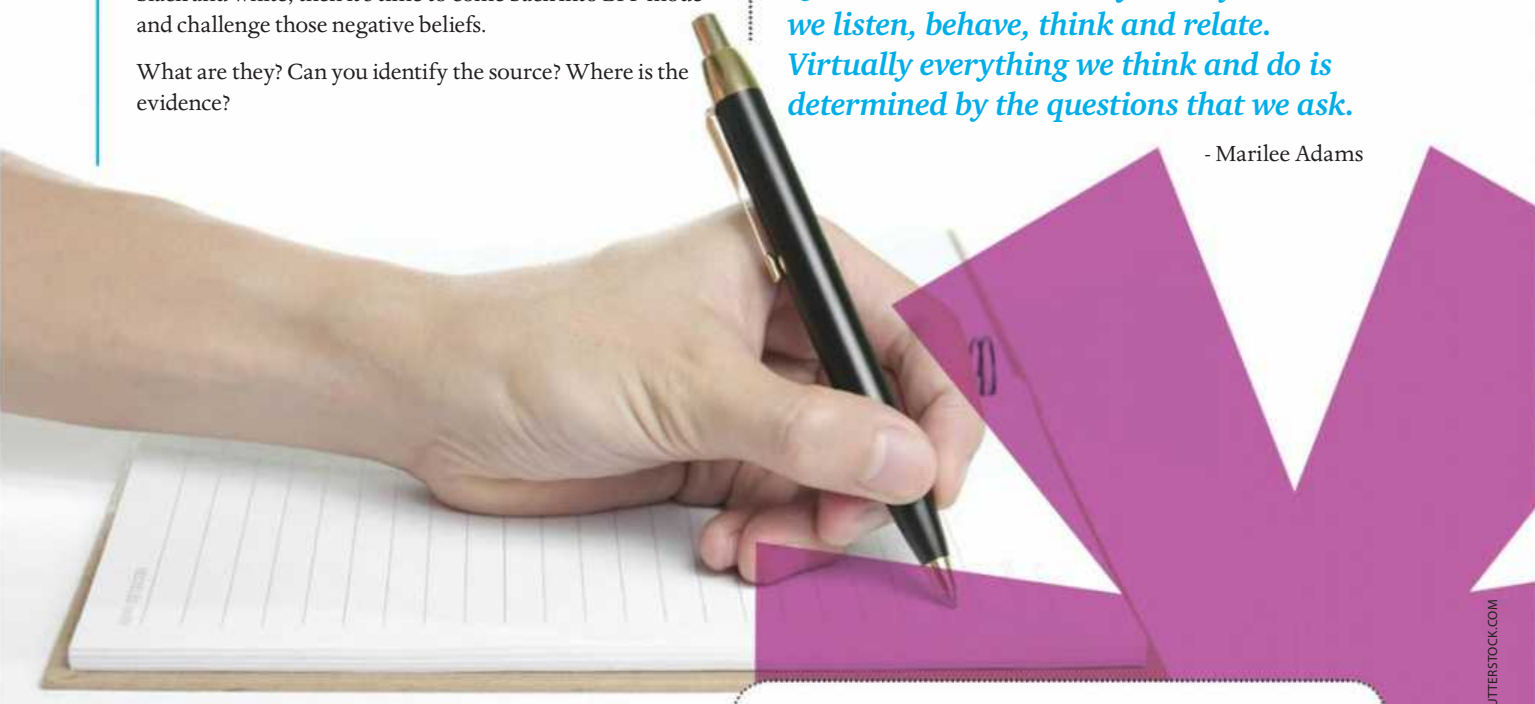


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Develop Your Learner mindset

According to psychotherapist Marilee Adams, author of Change your Questions, Change your Life: 7 Powerful Tools for Life and Work, it's important that we choose the right questions. When we use 'learner questions' as opposed to 'judger questions', we often get far more bang for our buck.

Typical learner questions include:

What just happened? What's useful here? What do I want? However, typical judger questions are likely to be: Who's to blame? What's wrong with me? What's wrong with them?

By empowering your learner, you open up your inner dialogue to more expansive questions such as: What's possible? What are my choices? What's best to do now?



Marinate a Little

Without a conscious effort to stop and smell the roses, life can pass us by like a goods train. By marinating in the good we allow that warm feeling of intense satisfaction and happiness to really seep in and flood the spaces in between. We begin to form different grooves in our subconscious and our game of "I spy" becomes a little less macabre.

What is it that brings you joy? How can you do more of that? Don't use time or money as an excuse.

There can be joy in the simple things – kick your shoes off and walk barefoot through the grass, grab a good book and sit beneath the shade of a tree, perform a radical act of kindness etc. Really surrender yourself to the positive energy that comes from being at peace and watch how that permeates your thoughts and your actions.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Have a Clear Vision

It's one thing to rattle off a list of things that we don't want in our lives - but having a clear picture of what we do want is far more inspiring. Whether you are great at visualisation or easily distracted, having a vision board is a powerful tool and tangible reminder of what you want to achieve. It allows you to hold that image in your mind. Display your board prominently and speak powerfully about what it represents to you, transport yourself there and 'feel it' for at least five minutes a day. How can you align yourself with the goal? What intentional action can you take today to move towards your desired reality?



Positive Affirmations

Finally, don't underestimate the power of positive affirmations. Sure they may feel a little kooky at first but practice makes a beautiful mind. Write them on sticky notes and place them strategically in your car, home or workspace as a gentle reminder. If you are a techno-kitten then there are also some fantastic apps that allow you to record personalised affirmations and set reminders throughout the day. When crafting your own affirmations, keep them short and sweet and remember to phrase them with positive language that is in the present. If you feel as though you are telling a lie, then preface your intention with the words 'I choose to' or 'I am willing to' until you feel less resistance.

Remember, learning to speak differently to ourselves is like learning a new language, at first it will feel foreign but eventually you'll be fluent in positive affirmations! Keep at it.

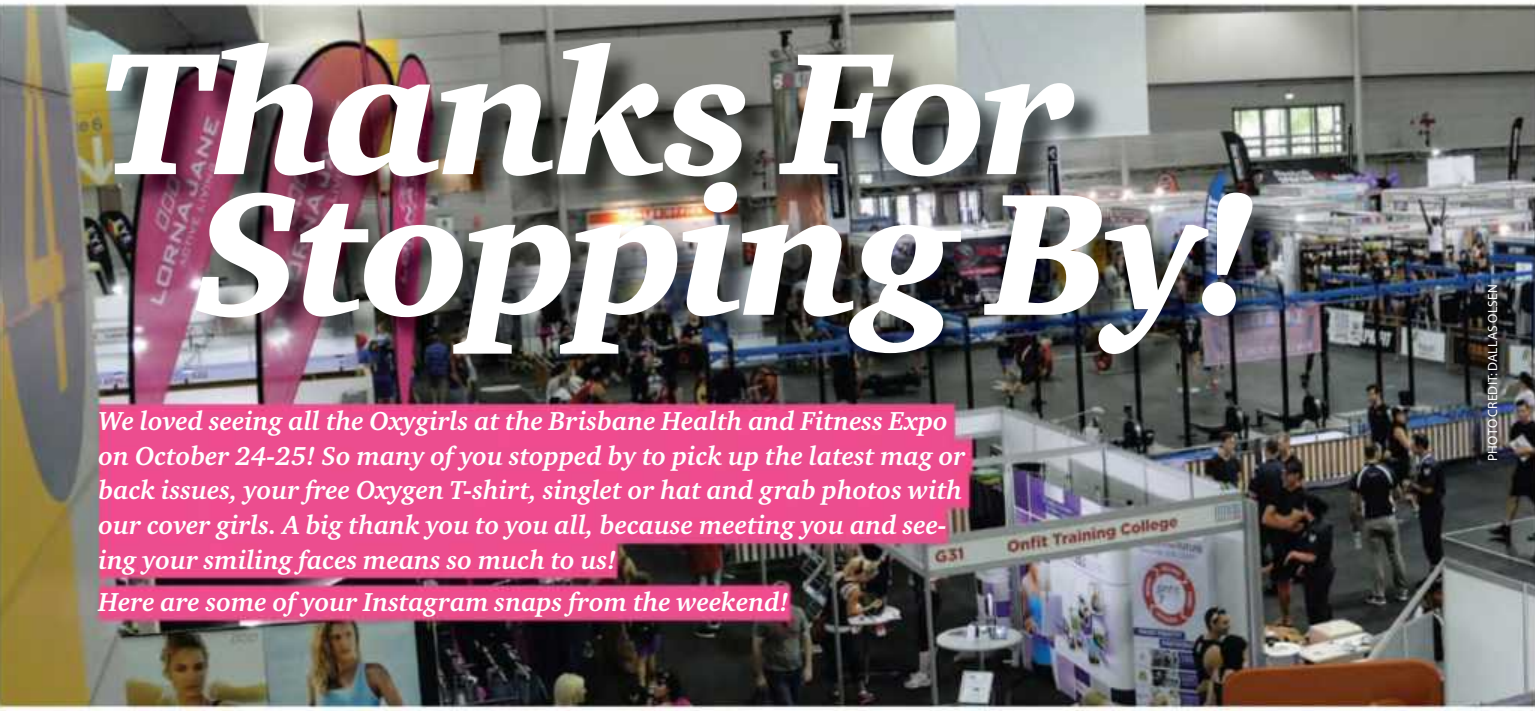


PHOTO CREDIT: DALLAS OLSEN

Thanks For Stopping By!

We loved seeing all the Oxygirls at the Brisbane Health and Fitness Expo on October 24-25! So many of you stopped by to pick up the latest mag or back issues, your free Oxygen T-shirt, singlet or hat and grab photos with our cover girls. A big thank you to you all, because meeting you and seeing your smiling faces means so much to us!

Here are some of your Instagram snaps from the weekend!

ANOTHER YEAR, UP ANOTHER GEAR

Wrapping up the final event for 2015 in Brisbane, the Fitness & Health Expo has earned its prime position as the ultimate event for fitness and health for yet another year. Bringing the top fitness brands, personalities and live sporting events together, the Expo is gaining a dedicated following across Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Brisbane from both industry professionals and fitness enthusiasts.

With visitors coming for a fun day out, to be educated and inspired, they enjoyed a variety of activities and entertainment including bodybuilding, sports modelling, CrossFit and powerlifting. The Healthy Living Stage was used to engage more general fitness enthusiasts via nutritional and health and wellbeing content. Plus their line-up of athletes and celebrities was stronger than it has been in years with appearances from people such as The Commando, Max 'The Body' Philisaire, Andrea Norton, Jeff Seid and Calum Von Moger.





@hannahvs_fitnessdiva: Look who I found, the @lindyolsen; this woman is such an inspiration.

@sailorsamwise: Thanks for the gift @oxygenmagau! Had an awesome time at the @ausfitnessexpo



@amberwalker: These girls! In an industry full of fakes, true love and passion for health and fitness always shines through. I consider myself blessed to be able to surround myself with women who aim to inspire and educate other women to be the best versions of themselves.

Next year, the Fitness & Health Expo will present all the elements that visitors have come to enjoy with even more celebrities, additional offerings for yoga and Pilates, and more involvement from the technology, clothing and apparel and supplement segments along with a far more diverse range of show specials.

In 2016, the confirmed dates for the Fitness & Health Expos across Australia are:

Melbourne: 29 April – 1 May, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

Perth: 19 – 21 August, Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre

Brisbane: 21- 23 October, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

For more information about attending one of the Expos or if you're interested in exhibiting please visit **www.fitnessexpo.com.au**

LIFT YOUR BUTT

(IN JUST 5 MOVES)

Simple moves to build a head-turning behind.

FITNESS MODEL: **KARINA ELLE LISENBEE** | PHOTOGRAPHY: **DALLAS OLSEN** | HAIR AND MAKEUP: **LISA LEE** | WORKOUT TIGHTS: **TONO A TONO**

The world is focused on behinds and as a result we all want to know how to get ours to look like "theirs": how to get it bigger, rounder, firmer etc. However, something a lot of us don't realise is that genetics plays a HUGE part in how big our booty can get! You may have a social media girl crush that has in your eyes 'the perfect booty' but genetically maybe yours can't get that big (naturally anyway).

The good news? You can still get your most awesome, head-turning booty relatively easy. You don't have to do hundreds of squats or try out every new move your friend tags you in on Instagram - the exercise that will get you your most awesome booty is a well-known one we like to call 'consistency!'

That's right; you need to be consistent with your workouts! If you're aiming to build and lift your booty, two focused booty/leg workouts a week is a good place to start. While weights are definitely your behind's bestie, it's also important to incorporate body weight moves as these target your muscles in a different way. By focusing on stabilisation and really squeezing at the top of each move, you'll be on your merry way to a lifted, form and round booty in no time.


CYBERFIT
5KG.

Exercise	Reps	Sets
Body Weight Squat	10-12	3-5
Jump Squat	10-12	3-5
Body Weight Lunge	10-12 each side	3-5
Fire Hydrant	12-15 each side	3-5
Kneeling Kickback	12-15 each side	3-5



Body Weight Squat

Set-up: Stand up tall with your arms by your sides. Keep your chest up, abs tight and eyes focused forward.

Action: With your abs tight, bend your knees and hips as if sitting in a chair until your thighs are parallel with the floor. Reverse the motion by driving through your heels and pressing your hips forward to return to the start position.

Jump Squat

Set-up: Stand tall with your arms by your side, chest up and abs tight. Squat halfway down and bring your arms in front of you, chest up and abs tight.

Action: Quickly press through your feet powerfully to push yourself out of the squat and jump in the air. You can release your arms to add more power to the movement. Land back in your half squat and repeat for reps.

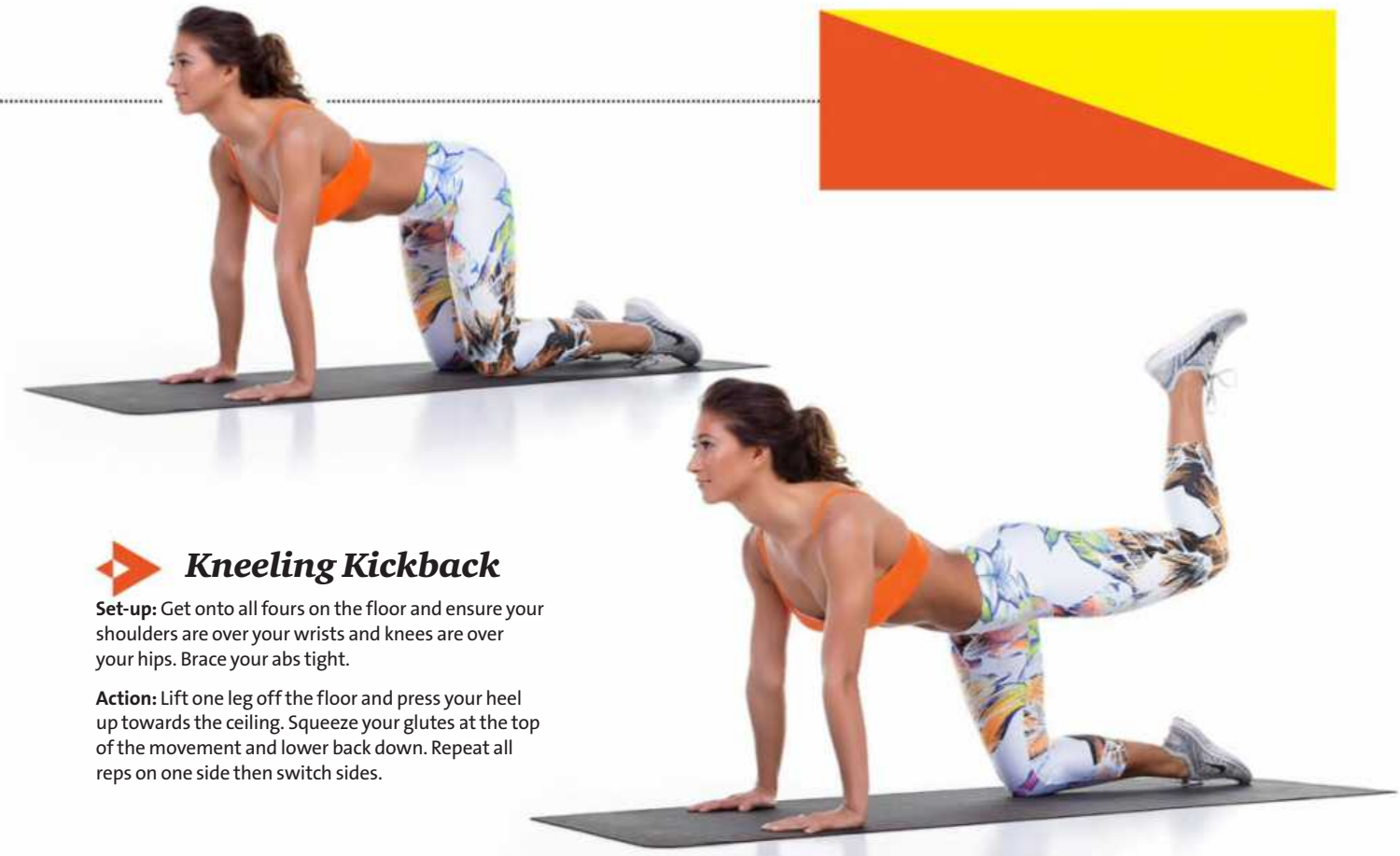




Fire Hydrant

Set-up: Get onto all fours on the floor and ensure your shoulders are over your wrists and knees are over your hips. Brace your abs tight.

Action: Squeeze your glutes and lift your knee out to the side, keep the lower part of your leg still to maintain the 90-degree angle in your leg. Squeeze at the top of the movement then return to the start position. Repeat all reps on one side before switching.



Kneeling Kickback

Set-up: Get onto all fours on the floor and ensure your shoulders are over your wrists and knees are over your hips. Brace your abs tight.

Action: Lift one leg off the floor and press your heel up towards the ceiling. Squeeze your glutes at the top of the movement and lower back down. Repeat all reps on one side then switch sides.

Body Weight Lunge

Set-up: Stand tall and take a giant step backwards with one foot. Keep your chest up, arms by your side and abs tight. You'll remain in this position for all reps on each leg.

Action: Bend both knees to lower yourself, making sure your front knee doesn't go beyond your toes. Stop just short of your rear knee touching the floor and reverse direction, driving through the heel of your forward foot to return to the starting position. Once you complete all reps with that leg forward, switch legs and repeat on the other side.



How to Detox the Healthy Way

TIPS AND TRICKS TO **REAP THE BENEFITS OF A DETOX YEAR ROUND**

BY **AMELIA RICCI**

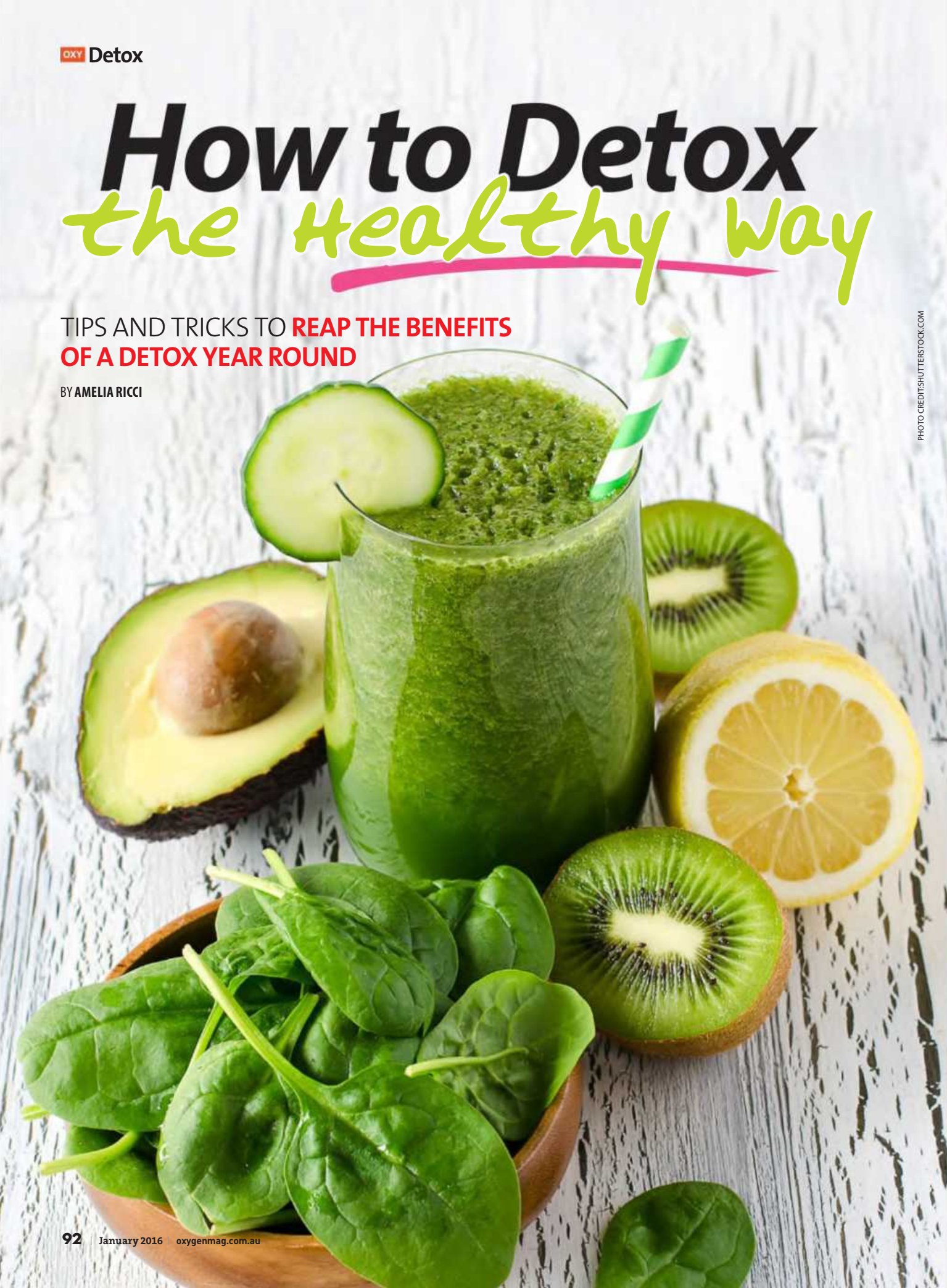


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WANTING TO LOOK HEALTHY AND FEEL ENERGETIC ARE THE MAIN REASONS MANY PEOPLE DETOX. However, few realise that 'detoxing' doesn't have to be living on lemon juice and cayenne pepper for days to fit into that tight dress for an event, or to drop a few kilos before a pool party.

Although some don't realise it, our bodies and organs naturally detoxify themselves. We don't need a radical alternative to flush out or cleanse our system, because our system does that itself. However, we can give our system a helping hand when we have veered a little off track.

When we consume large amounts of processed foods, alcohol and other items that our bodies don't agree with, we find they don't work as efficiently. As a result we can feel sluggish, uncomfortable and have low levels of motivation. But this does not call for a week-long strict juice fast! It just means we should aim to consume more of a nutrient-dense, plant-based diet (avoiding starchy and empty carbs) in the days after a binge or bender, alongside a balanced diet, so we can get back on track.

Even if you haven't overindulged, it is still important to consume a variety of plant-based nutrients every single day. By consuming nutrient-packed foods on a regular basis, you may find you don't get to that place mentioned above, where your body doesn't work so efficiently, because your body craves healthy rather than unhealthy foods.

So where does the problem really lie in a typical detox? The foods that are recommended on detoxes are not the reason detoxes are unhealthy. The foods are actually incredibly good for you and have natural cleansing and detoxifying effects on the body! However the starvation and strictness of typical detox programs are what make them unhealthy. So get rid of the 'go without' mentality and focus on healthy, nutritious foods.

You may also find that foods with detoxing effects are actually very delicious! In fact, most of them you've probably tried before or consume on a regular basis. If you do, that's wonderful – keep it up; this article may give you some new foods to incorporate, too. However, the vast majority of us don't consume these beneficial foods on a regular basis, so it's time to start.

It's important to remember that detoxification is not just about food, it is about your whole lifestyle and includes balancing your exercise regime and breaking bad habits which no longer serve you. Just like consuming beneficial and detoxifying foods, your exercise regime should change regularly to bring best results and it is always better to aim for small steps of continuous improvement when trying to overcome bad habits rather than going cold turkey.



AMELIA RICCI

Amelia is a personal trainer, Pilates instructor and yoga teacher with 20 years experience. Certified with Fitness Australia, her mission is to educate and inspire women to achieve their best body ever, with a simple approach – no fads, no gimmicks. Amelia's qualifications include yoga, Pilates, personal training and group fitness accreditation, as well as a Bachelor and Master of Business. Amelia believes perfection is boring and the way to feel great is to eat fresh, clean foods, train hard, love yourself and never stop learning. As a two-time Fitness Model Champion and mentor to Australia's successful fitness and bikini models, Amelia enjoys working in her business Living Beauty Fitness. Amelia has launched a new yoga and wellness eBook which contains all her health and fitness principles in one handy guide at www.4weekbikinibody.com.

You can also connect with Amelia on Facebook: AmeliaRicciSportsModelFitnessTrainer or Instagram: livingbeautyamelia

The benefits of detoxifying foods

We all have good intentions to live a healthy lifestyle but the constant pressures of life mean that it can be easy to rely on convenience foods to meet our nutritional needs. Many of us are working longer hours and have many commitments such as housework, family obligations and activities outside work.

By consuming detoxing foods on a regular basis, this can bring about a sense of freshness and help to keep us on a healthy and happy path for the longer term. While detox programs promise many benefits, often these will only appear in the short term but regular consumption of these foods, along with a balanced diet, can produce long-term benefits such as:

- Increased energy
- Improved digestion
- More even moods
- Glowing skin
- Healthy hair and nails
- Less anxiety and stress
- Better concentration

If that's not enough motivation to start adding detoxifying foods to your regular diet, know that they can also reduce the incidence of chronic disease, slow down the ageing process and lower the risk of minor illnesses such as colds and flu.

Detoxifying foods

Soups, smoothies and juices are all packed with nutrients and can be consumed year round, not just on a detox program. Keep your juicer or blender handy so you can easily make nourishing foods for yourself and the rest of your family as part of a balanced diet. Below are some of the items which have detoxifying effects.

- Fruit
- Lemons
- Limes
- Apples
- Pear
- Blueberries, raspberries or strawberries
- Orange
- Vegetables
- Carrots
- Sweet Potato
- Radish
- Turnips
- Celery
- Cucumber
- Spinach
- Fennel
- Mixed sprouts
- Avocado
- Spring onions
- Red capsicum
- Herbs and bulbs
- Parsley
- Coriander
- Basil
- Mint
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Turmeric



Detoxifying Drinks

Filtered water and caffeine-free herbal tea are drinks recommended to consume on detoxes. However, plenty of water should be consumed daily, and sipping on herbal tea regularly will also provide you with serious benefits. Ginger, nettle, peppermint or lemongrass herbal teas are some good examples.

It is important to avoid any gimmicky detox teas as well. While they may be all over social media and promise a large variety of benefits, often they can cause abdominal pain, uncomfortable digestion and fall short of their far-fetched promises. A balanced diet with plenty of nutrient-packed foods will provide you with more benefits than any 'magical' tea!

TIP: Place a beautiful bowl of fruit on your kitchen bench, fill vases with spinach and fresh herbs so the bright colours will attract you to consume these foods on a regular basis.



Pamper yourself and relax

It is vital to regularly take time out from your busy schedule to give your body time to relax and rejuvenate from the inside out. Every so often, clear your calendar of commitments, even if it's just for two days. You will reap the benefits of better clarity and efficiency when you give yourself this time out.

Yoga for Detoxing

Practising yoga regularly is a great way to keep your mind and body feeling fresh and clean. Each yoga posture has specific benefits for the internal organs too. For example, in a forward bend posture, your liver, kidneys and spleen are compressed and then when you come out of the posture a fresh blood supply is delivered to these organs. In addition, yogic breathing is very relaxing and calming and can help you stay focused and clear-headed.

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



YOGA POSES FOR DETOX

Try these three yoga poses at home, always remembering to only go to your edge, and avoid pushing past your level of flexibility. Yoga poses should be comfortable and never practised to the point of pain or discomfort.

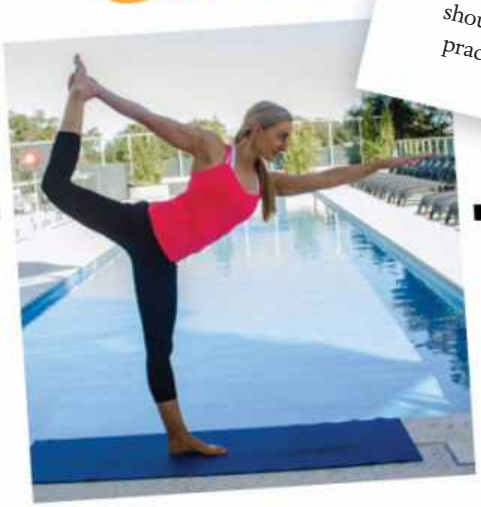


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Dancer's Pose (Natarajasana)

As well as developing a sense of balance and focus, this posture stretches the legs and shoulders. Its cleansing properties include opening the chest and lungs to create more space for the breath.

Triangle Pose (Utthita Trikonasana)

This pose increases the lateral flexibility of the spine and develops the muscles along the spine. It also strengthens the legs and opens the chest which allows for deeper breathing. Its cleansing benefits include stimulating the internal organs and restoring the digestive fire.





Wide-Legged Forward Bend (Prasarita Padottanasana)

A great way to open and stretch the back of the legs, this pose also includes far-reaching benefits such as relieving headaches and fatigue. It is calming and can be restorative for the whole body as the body's circulation is improved. This improved circulation comes from the inversion of the head which means blood travels to different parts of the body and this is therapeutic after the yoga practice has finished.

References

Juiced on Time, Make Mine a Nutrient Cocktail (2005) Scott Josephson, MS, Registered Dietician.
The Complete Book of Yoga (2001) James Hewitt.

Detox Truths and Traps

BE CAUTIOUS WHEN LOOKING TO PURCHASE VARIOUS PRODUCTS OFFERING TO GIVE YOU ULTIMATE HEALTH IN A BOTTLE – IF IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT USUALLY IS! Your body is a finely tuned machine and is already capable of cleansing. To clarify, we are all cleansing right now, and have been since the moment of conception. Every time we breathe out, we've cleansed our body of the metabolic waste known as carbon dioxide. Every time we have a bowel movement, our body is eliminating old cellular material (interestingly, up to 40 per cent of each bowel movement is dead cells).

Cleansing occurs because our body's cells are constantly dying and being replaced with new cells. Our spleen and liver and stomach cells do it, our intestinal walls do it, even our bones and muscle cells do this regeneration cycle.

By consuming detoxing drinks and foods on a regular basis, this will help to improve the body's natural regeneration process. Make healthy dietary habits part of your routine, such as a daily green juice and drinking adequate water. This does not mean treats are off the menu; they are just something occasional to have in addition to your daily healthy meal plan.

Try to add relaxation and yoga to your exercise program so that you feel balanced by incorporating activities that nurture and restore the mind and body for long-term health and wellbeing.

pain in the neck

Causes and treatments of niggling neck pain



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

TODAY IS ONE OF THOSE DAYS: I GET UP IN THE MORNING TO REACH FOR MY ALARM AND THE PAIN IN MY NECK HAS STARTED ALREADY. It's making me uncomfortable, it's difficult to move my shoulder blades, it hurts when I turn my head and I feel a tingling sensation down my arm. Countless times I asked myself if it is related to my sleep, my pillow, the mattress or just the stress from daily life, but the pain comes and goes, some days worse than others.

If you can relate to this story, and if you have ever felt like a rigid tin man, you will agree that neck pain can be so sharp and debilitating that it is one of the worst injuries to get. Even the common stiff neck limits a person's ability to move their head and shoulders. How can one function, let alone properly exercise if it is a problem to move their head from side to side? The neck as a part of the spine plays an important role in holding up the head. Considering the average weight of the head on a human adult is 5.5kg (around eight per cent of total body mass), this could be a serious problem.

This is the reality for many people who are frequently experiencing chronic neck pain – it limits their abilities and activities and, as a result, it affects their mood in a negative way. While we normally attempt to control it with a painkiller and cross our fingers it passes soon, this is not the solution.

Due to our daily habits such as sitting at a desk, commuting to work, the use of one-armed purses and heavy backpacks, holding smartphones and texting and checking emails half the day, neck strain and injury are very common. Doing heavy work, playing sports and exercising under stress can cause a stiff neck as well. Not ensuring proper alignment and posture while exercising can pull the muscles in the neck, aggravating the pain or bringing back past injuries. Once the neck is injured from an accident such as whiplash, it can reduce the flow of oxygen through the body and may even cause nerve pain to the arms and fingers. This can affect your grip, and the partial or total motion of the arm and hand.

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Causes of neck pain

- **Sleeping:** While sleeping, we are not conscious of the quality of sleep we are receiving. Very few people pay attention to the condition of their bed and pillows, such as their size, shape, and density. Check your pillows and mattress and set up pillows around the areas that provide support. I personally use a wooden pillow which has made a positive impact on improving my neck and back pain.
- **Teeth grinding:** While sleeping can cause a constant activation of the muscles of the neck, thus aggravating the neck issue, teeth grinding throughout the night can worsen this. If you tend to grind your teeth at night, look into getting a mouth guard.
- **Energy blockage:** The throat chakra or fifth chakra is located in the neck, above the collarbone. This chakra is associated with the thyroid gland. By ensuring you have a healthy throat area you assist truthful and honest expression of your ideas. The chakra of communication can be blocked due to tension from specific events or stresses in our life, like guilt, blame, fear of speaking the truth or a lack of communication with others.
- **Training with poor technique:** Many people at the gym do not pay attention to the alignment of their spine while training, especially in the neck area. While performing any exercise, the back should maintain a straight line from ear to shoulder to hip.

 During many exercises, we look at ourselves in the mirror while moving. This can create poor posture and alignment. For instance, while performing deadlifts the hips travel back and the flat back extends parallel to the floor. Looking in the mirror could cause the neck to pull the entire abdominal wall out of alignment, thus creating an internal imbalance and throwing off the activation of the core. The eyes should follow the pattern of the movement while moving in any plane. While executing a twist the eyes should follow the trajectory of the body. With everything to consider for safety while exercising, it is easy to see why it is important to train with supervision and the right professional aid to avoid any improper form which may result in dysfunction of the joints.

Natural Treatments for Neck Pain

Besides taking a pain reliever, there are few options to improve your neck pain:

- **Massage:** One of the best types of massage is a neck massage. The cervical spine, comprised of seven cervical vertebrae, is a complex system and crucial to lay out our whole spine. Many nerves run from this area, connecting a vital section of our body with our brain. The massage therapist compresses around the neck and taps the base of the head, releasing pressure points and increasing blood flow to the area.
- **Spinal decompression therapy:** Stress is accumulated in the neck, compressing and cutting blood flowing into the arm. Find a chiropractor or professional who can decompress the spine by applying traction and stretching the neck, which will bring oxygen in between the vertebrae.
- **Apply heat:** Use a heating pad or an electrical pillow for 15 minutes, three times a day, or simply run warm water in the shower. This can help to divert the pain.
- **Stretch:** Whether you take a yoga class or stretch by yourself, this can help to prevent built up tension and tightness.

If the pain persists and irradiates to the arms, it is advised to seek help from a health care professional such as a GP or a specialist who can set up an MRI to check the state of the cervical bones.

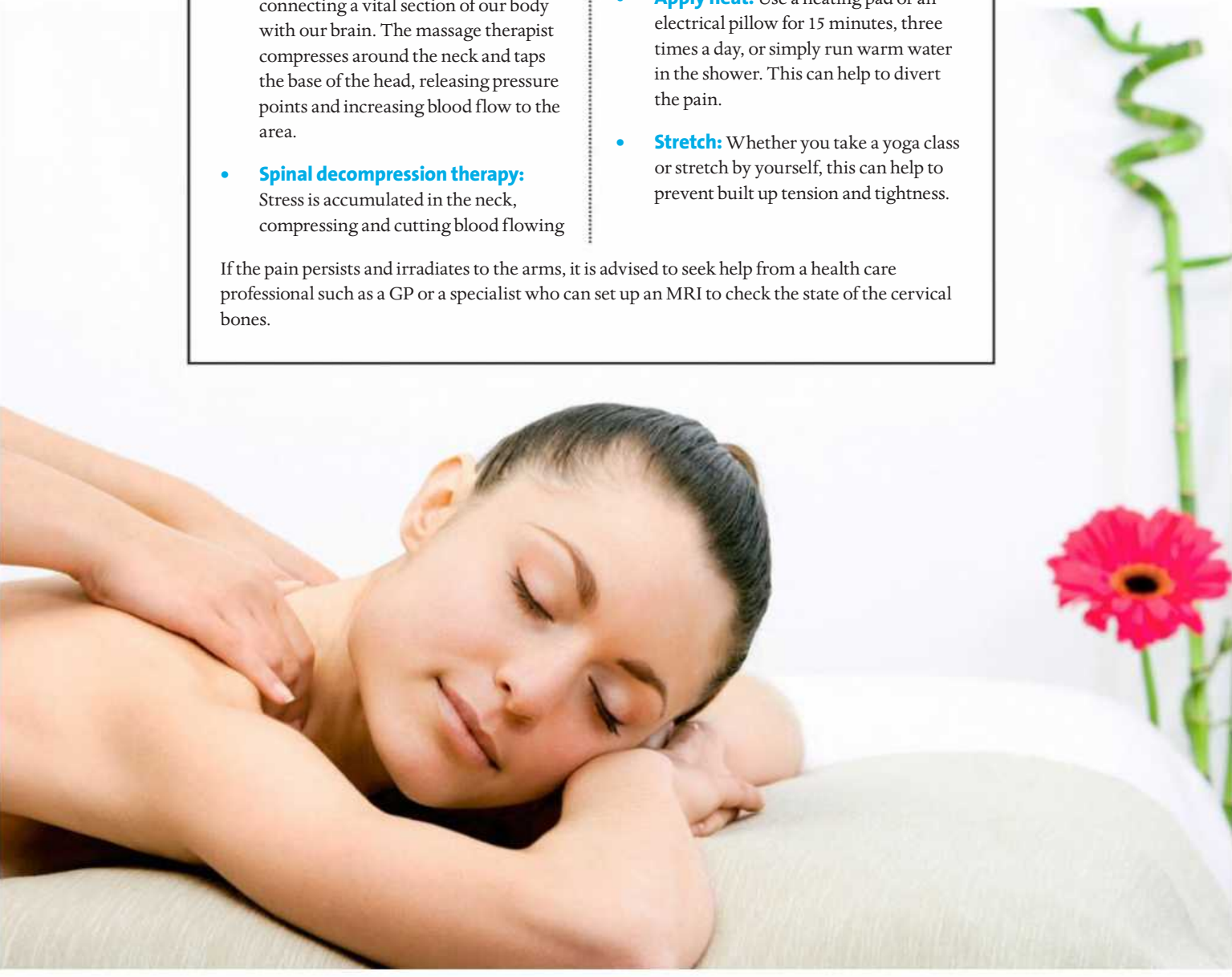


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How to stay away from neck pain

- **Be sure your bed and pillow help keep your neck in proper alignment.** Avoid awkward positions while sleeping.
- **While working at a desk, driving, reading books, texting and using smartphones, hold your head comfortably** - not too far forward or back.
- **Take frequent breaks** and rotate your head gently.
- **Reiki could be a great energy therapy** to release any emotional psychosomatic blockage.
- **Practise these basic stretches** – see the example below.



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EXAMPLE NECK STRETCH

Sit in a chair, ensuring your feet are comfortable and touching the floor. Sit straight and hold one side of the chair with the right arm. Inhale deeply and bring the left arm to the right ear overhead.

Exhale fully as you gently bring the left ear over to the left shoulder. In this position breathe deeply and mindfully. Close your eyes if you need to get connected to the sensations happening in your neck and arm. Remember to keep your core muscles tight in order to maintain a strong posture which will support the whole spine. Repeat on the other side.

This stretch can be modified by bringing the chin up and away from the shoulder or bringing the chin down and rotating the head from side to side.



JOA RIVAS

Joa was born in Venezuela and is a personal trainer, nutrition specialist, yoga, Pilates and tai chi instructor. She is also a general conditioner for posture, fat loss, personal development, and Thai massage therapist. She lives in Toronto, Canada. For more information visit www.joafitness.com

do you need a digital detox?

REDUCE SCREEN TIME TO INCREASE CREATIVITY, PERFORMANCE AND PASSION FOR WHAT YOU DO.

BY **NIKKI FOGDEN-MOORE**

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



"How can you start right now to help deal with stress and help your body cope with daily mental and physical demands? By giving yourself a regular digital detox."

Does it ever feel as if life is just speeding by and you're running from one thing to the next, without time to pause and regroup? Have you lost your sense of humour? Are you feeling more sensitive or just not feeling quite yourself? And have you put working out, exercise and general wellbeing at the bottom of the list as you don't have time?

You are not alone! Despite all the technology that is supposed to save time, it seems like people are more stressed and time-poor than ever. This is not "news". UK communications regulator Ofcom said British adults spend an average of eight hours and 41 minutes a day on media devices, compared with the average night's sleep of eight hours and 21 minutes. That's more time on digital devices than sleep! According to Nielson Research US, Americans spend up to 60 hours a week consuming content across up to four devices! Australia is not far behind either.

Eye strain headaches, posture issues, fatigue at work, lack of sleep and lack of physical activity are just a few side effects of too much screen time. We all know this is certainly the case; what's worrying is that intelligent, savvy people, who know what healthy living means, are not taking the most basic steps to slow it down and reboot their hard drive each day and get off line to reconnect.



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At a certain point, your body simply says 'NO'. It may be in the form of a cold or flu, poor eye sight, a niggling pain or injury, headaches, digestive complaints, skin disorders, insomnia or just the fact you feel exhausted and can't concentrate efficiently during the day. By the time it has come to this, it is already a reflection of a low immune system and the cellular impact of stress. A lot of emphasis is placed on exercise and diet for general health and wellbeing, but a big part of the wellness and vitality picture is often left out: mindset and mental clarity and getting back to basics with the three core pillars of vitality: fresh air, fresh food and a fresh perspective.

Taking regular nano-breaks away from your laptop, phone, tablet and TV can rapidly produce great results in just a few minutes a day every day:

1. 1. Reduce the effects of dry eyes and strained vision
2. Create a pause of mental clarity and creativity
3. Reconnect with your surroundings and your purpose
4. Make better informed decisions - from your gut instinct rather than reactionary ones
5. Notice your posture and your breathing
6. Improve sleep
7. Reduce stress
8. Increase mental and physical vitality

How can you start right now to help deal with stress and help your body cope with daily mental and physical demands? By giving yourself a regular digital detox.

HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL TIPS FOR A DAILY REBOOT:

DURING THE DAY:

- ☐ Place a sticky note on your computer that says "take a nano break". Get up and walk away from your computer, go talk to a colleague personally rather than emailing across the room.
- ☐ Stay off social media in the morning on the way to work – listen to music, a podcast or read a hard-copy book instead.
- ☐ Take a fresh-air break at lunchtime, rather than eating lunch with your phone or iPad in front of you.
- ☐ Look up and look around! Head out for a quick break around the office, take the dog for a walk, do something active with your kids during the weekend.
- ☐ Use time away from work to recharge your mental and physical batteries.



AT NIGHT:

- ☐ Avoid TV, illuminated alarm clocks and other digital stimulus in the bedroom.
- ☐ Read a book before you go to sleep, rather than watching television or working late on the computer. Meditate and concentrate on breathing.
- ☐ Channel your thoughts from worry to a place of peace.
- ☐ Create a regular bedtime routine and a regular sleep-wake schedule.
- ☐ Create a restful environment that is dark, cool and comfortable.
- ☐ Play restful music to help you relax.
- ☐ Keep a diary of things that are on your mind, get them out of your head and on to paper – even if it's a list of things to do for the next day.

PHOTO CREDIT:SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

"If we do not fully recharge our batteries, then we diminish our energy levels and our ability to handle stress and perform daily tasks."



Think of a digital detox as recharging your own batteries. If we do not fully recharge our batteries, then we diminish our energy levels and our ability to handle stress and perform daily tasks. So after you've read this, rather than jump on your iPhone, connect to Netflix or read a book on your kindle, why not lace up your shoes, head out the door or jump up and go get talking to your family or a colleague? Sometimes you need to disconnect to reconnect.



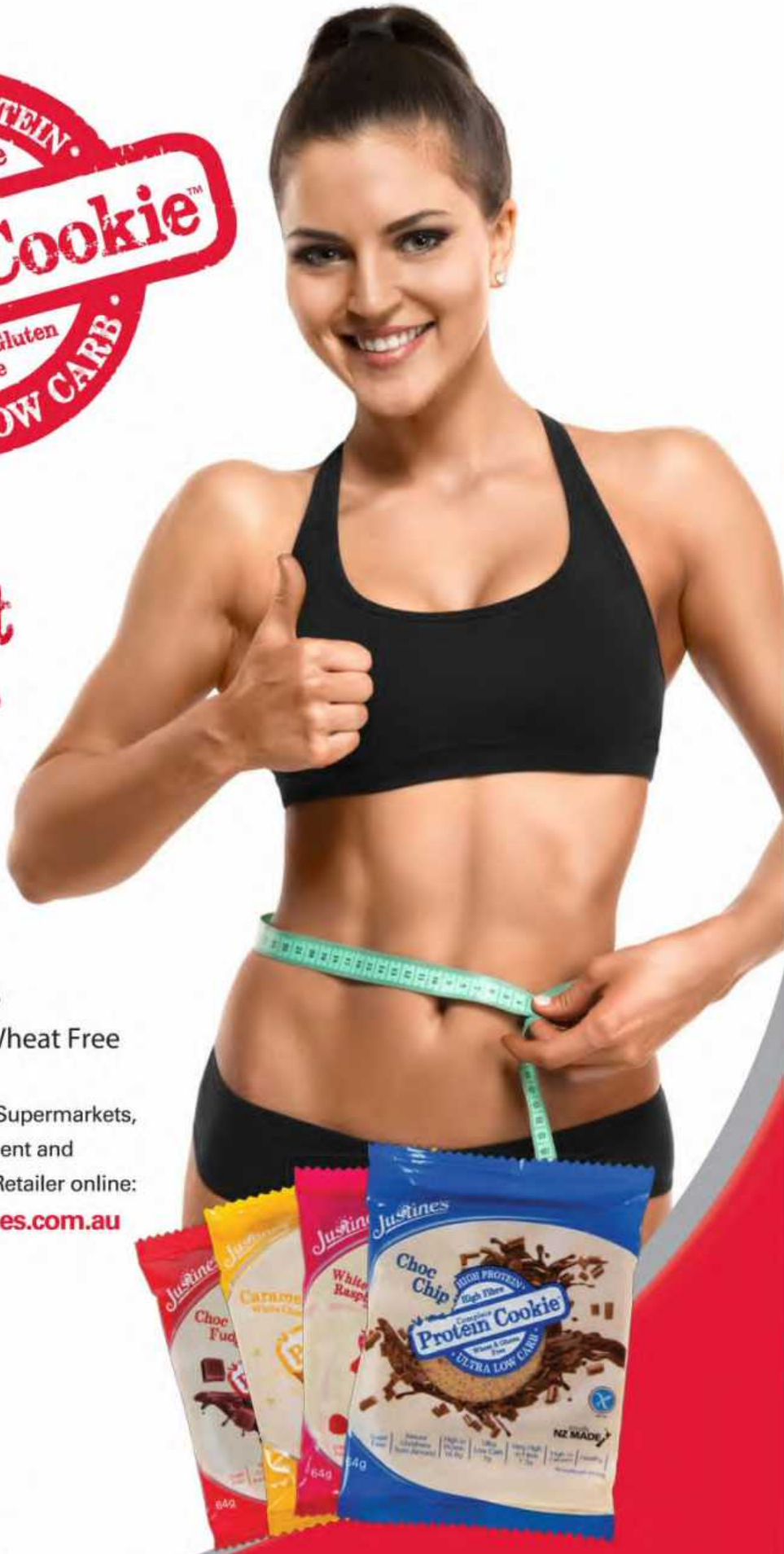
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Core POWER

Six moves to a marvellous mid-section and killer confidence

BY **ANNA MCMANAMEY** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DALLAS OLSEN** | HAIR AND MAKEUP **LISA LEE**

WASHBOARD ABS AND PERFECT POSTURE HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: A STRONG CORE.

The muscles that make up your mid-section play a pivotal role in not only how you rock a crop top, but also your ability to stand tall and hold your body upright. If your belly sags or bulges, it doesn't just mean that your diet could be a little better – it also means your core muscles are probably weak. Strengthening your abdominals through resistance training is the fastest way to improve your posture, prevent injury and put you well on your way to revealing a sexy six-pack.



So how do you get this six-pack, you ask? If the first thing you think you need to do is hundreds of crunches then you're in for a rude shock! Achieving draw-dropping results requires calling into play all of your core muscles, including the rectus abdominis, internal obliques, external obliques, and your deepest ab muscle, the transverse abdominis – and these are certainly not all used during a standard, boring sit-up!

The six moves in this workout not only beat the tedium of standard sit-ups and crunches - they also work the core from all angles, giving your tummy the necessary stimulus it needs to tighten and transform.
Perform this workout twice per week together with some high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and a smart nutrition plan and you'll give your waist that WOW factor in no time!

EXERCISE	REPS	SETS
Stability Ball Russian Twist	8-12 each side	2-3
Stability Ball Bridge with Hip Roll	10-20 each side	2-3
Stability Ball Side Crunch	10-20 each side	2-3
Stacked Leg Crunch with Arm Reach	10-20 each side	2-3
Side Plank Dumbbell Reach	8-12 each side	2-3
Incline Reverse Crunch	10-20 each side	2-3

ANNA'S TOP TIPS FOR TRAINING ABS

1. **Focus on slow, controlled, deliberate movements – don't cheat yourself by using momentum.**
2. **Keep your abs drawn in and braced while performing all the exercises. Think of pulling your belly button in towards your spine.**
3. **Don't forget to breathe! Exhale at the peak of the contraction to engage your abs more efficiently and really feel the burn.**



TIP: Focus on initiating the rotation from your abs and avoid twisting from your shoulders.

1

STABILITY BALL RUSSIAN TWIST

Set-up: Holding a medicine ball in both hands, sit on a stability ball with your feet flat on the floor and shoulder-width apart. Extend your arms in front of you so the medicine ball is at shoulder height. Walk your feet forward and lean back until your upper back and shoulders are resting on the stability ball. Your torso should form a straight line from your head to your hips. Legs are bent at 90 degrees.
Action: With your arms outstretched, rotate your torso to the left side until your shoulder touches the stability ball. Then repeat this movement on the right side.



2

STABILITY BALL BRIDGE WITH HIP ROLL

Set-up: Lie face-up on a mat with your head, shoulders and torso on the floor and your heels resting on top of a stability ball. Brace your abs, squeeze your glutes, and lift your hips towards the ceiling, keeping your arms by your side, palms down.
Action: Using your core, roll the stability ball to the left side as far as possible. Repeat this movement on the right side.

TIP: Squeezing your glutes will keep your hips high, spine neutral and work your booty too!



3

STABILITY BALL SIDE CRUNCH

Set-up: Lie sideways with one hip on top of a stability ball. Cross your arms over your chest. Place your top foot on the floor in front of your bottom foot in a staggered stance.
Action: Crunch upwards on the ball, lifting your upper body. Return to the starting position. Be sure to perform the exercise for the desired number of sets and reps on both sides.

TIP: Focus on initiating the move through the oblique muscles. Avoid leaning back, arching or reaching through the neck.



3

STACKED LEG CRUNCH WITH ARM REACH

Set-up: Lie face-up on a mat with your legs out straight and toes pointing to the ceiling. Place the heel of your left foot on top of the toes of your right foot in a stacked position. Place your left hand lightly behind your head. Extend your right arm to the ceiling.

Action: Push your lower back into the floor and lift your upper back off the ground and slightly forwards, reaching your right arm towards the ceiling. Return to the starting position. Repeat exercise on the other side for the desired number of sets and reps.

TIP: Keep your chin pointed upwards towards the ceiling as you perform the crunch. This will isolate your core more effectively and minimise strain on your neck.





4

SIDE PLANK DUMBBELL REACH

Set-up: Lie on an exercise mat with your right side facing down. Place your right forearm on the mat, palm down, positioning your elbow under your shoulder. Hold a dumbbell in your left hand, placing it directly in front of your hips. Extend your legs out straight, stacking your upper leg on top of your lower leg.

Action: Lift your hips off the floor, contracting your abs to hold the position. Raise the dumbbell directly over your shoulder. Lower the dumbbell to the floor, maintaining the side plank position. Perform desired number of arm reaches before lowering your hips back to the starting position. Repeat on the other side.

TIP: Make sure your body remains in a straight line from head to toe and that your neck is aligned with your spine. Avoid leaning back or forward.



5

INCLINE REVERSE CRUNCH

Set-up: Set your incline bench to about 20 degrees. Lie face-up on the bench with your head higher than your feet. Reach back and grip the end of the bench for support.

Action: Keeping your legs straight and abs tight, raise your legs until they are straight up from your hips. Then, squeeze your glutes and lift your hips off the bench, rolling back onto your spine and extending your toes to the ceiling. Slowly lower the hips back onto the bench and return your legs to the starting position.

TIP: The lowering phase should be performed in a slow and controlled fashion. Imagine isolating each vertebra of your spine as you lower your hips back onto the bench. Elevating the incline of the bench will make this move more challenging.



ANNA MCMANAMEY

Anna is a champion fitness model with several Australian titles and world runner-up, Oxygen cover girl and coach specialising in body transformations and empowering women to love their bodies. The former television news reporter grew up in Sydney where she competed at the highest level as a rhythmic gymnast and dancer. After suffering seven years with an eating disorder due to the pressure of competition, Anna became motivated to take control of her health. She enlisted the help of a sports dietician and trainer, and so began her journey to a healthy lifestyle and ultimately a new career. Today, as a fulltime fitness professional, she is passionate about educating and inspiring women to achieve a healthy relationship with food, exercise and body image.

For more information visit **www.iamanna.com.au** or find her on Facebook: amcmanamey or Twitter/Instagram: anna_mcmanamey

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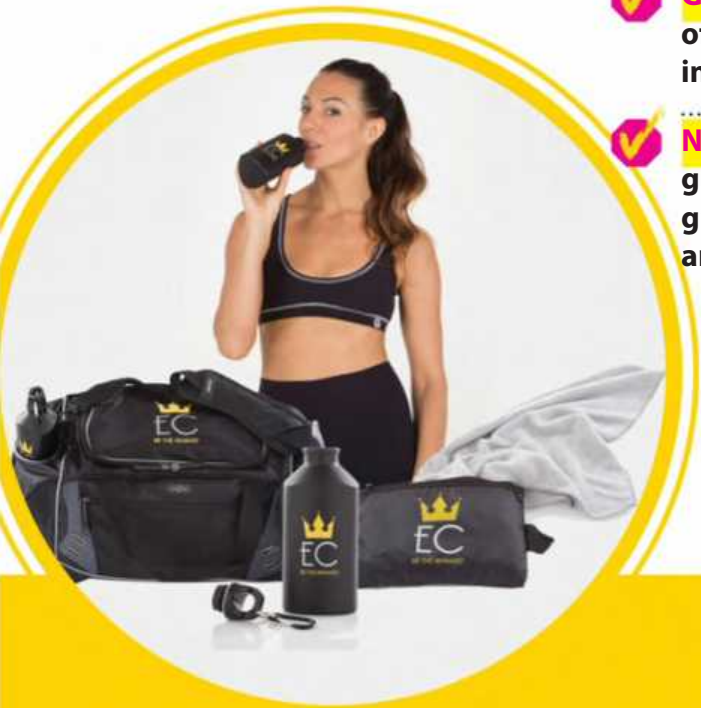
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HURRY, THIS OFFER ENDS 29TH JANUARY 2016

SUMMER HIITs

When it's so nice outside, are you looking for an excuse to skip the gym but shred some fat and stay fit? These five new high-intensity interval training programs take 30 minutes or less and are intense enough to keep you lean, strong and in tiptop shape. Enjoy Mother Nature while you burn fat and earn your right to wear those short shorts!

1 RUNNING

ROAD

1. Warm up for three to five minutes with light jogging and dynamic stretching.
2. Find a low-traffic street and pick a landmark or a tree 30 to 60 metres away and sprint to it.
3. Turn around and easy-jog (or walk) back to where you started.
4. Repeat for 20 minutes.
5. Jog or walk for five to 10 minutes to cool down.

TRACK

1. Locate a neighbourhood track and note the 100-, 200- and 400-metre markers on the track as you warm up by running a kilometre at an easy pace (typically two laps around a standard track).
2. Choose a distance (100, 200, 400 metres, depending on your fitness level) and sprint it at about 60 per cent, then recover by walking for the same distance, working your way around the track.
3. Repeat for 20 minutes, steadily increasing your intensity percentage with each sprint. Science suggests that such an approach may help improve your muscle endurance and burn a few extra calories following the workout.
4. Cool down for five to 10 minutes.

HILL

1. Scout your neighbourhood or local parks and find a hill that is about 30 metres long, about one-third the length of a football field.
2. After a three- to five-minute warm-up of jogging and dynamic stretching, sprint up the hill at about 60 to 70 per cent of your max.
3. Walk or jog lightly back down to recover.
4. Repeat for 20 minutes, increasing your intensity and speed with each sprint.
5. Cool down for five to 10 minutes.

Sizzle and push your fitness level this season on the road, track and river with these five unique and demanding cardio programs.
By Michelle Basta Speers, NSCA-CPT



2 CYCLING

1. Find a road in an area with little traffic, such as a bike path or country road.
2. Warm up for two to three minutes, cycling at a moderate pace.
3. Get into a higher gear and push the pace for 30 seconds, then follow with an easy pace for 30 seconds.
4. Continue this pattern for 30 minutes, playing with your time intervals (e.g., 45 seconds hard and 45 seconds moderate) and/or gear difficulty.
5. Slow to a moderate pace for five to 10 minutes to cool down.

3 ROWING

1. Rent or borrow a rowboat or (preferably) sculling boat and warm up by rowing at a light pace for two to three minutes.
2. Alternate between hard and fast strokes and slower, easier ones. Count your strokes during each sprint and recover for half that number. See table for sample program.
3. Cool down for two to three minutes.

INTERVAL	HARD STROKES	EASY STROKES	SETS
1	10	5	4
2	15	7	4
3	20	10	4
4	15	7	4
5	10	5	4
6	30	15	3
7	45	23	2
8	60	30	1

Half an hour and you're done (seriously)!

Have a happy, Happy New Year!

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Made from 100 per cent natural and organic components, the ANDROMEDA candle features a collection of essential oils such as rosewood, lavender, patchouli, rose, jasmine and rose geranium to help calm the mind, relieve sadness and ease pain. Born out of a love of Greek mythology and cosmic wonder, the constellation-inspired candle is made using pure soy wax, cedarwood wicks and recycled glassware.

RRP: $40

For more information visit **www.tandamodern.com**



Winning combo

This fat-melting whey protein recipe combines the metabolism-boosting power of green tea and the fresh flavour of lychee. **By Shoshana Pritzker, RD, CDN**

LYCHEE, COCONUT & GREEN-TEA SMOOTHIE
Makes 1 serving

- 9 fresh or canned lychees
- 1 scoop plain or vanilla whey protein powder
- ¼ cup light coconut milk
- ¼ cup heavily steeped green tea, chilled
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- natural sweetener of choice (optional)
- ½ cup ice

Steep 1 bag of green tea in ¼ cup of hot water until dark. Remove bag from water and allow tea to cool in the fridge or freezer. Peel and de-seed the lychees, or if using canned, rinse and drain the lychees. Place all ingredients in a blender and mix until smooth. Enjoy.

Nutrition facts (per serving): calories 231, total fat 6 g, saturated fat 4 g, trans fat 0 g, protein 26 g, salt 55 mg, carbs 22 g, fibre 2 g, sugar 18 g

Green tea has been shown to ramp up fat burning by increasing energy expenditure when taken before or during workouts.

No whey! Think you're getting too much protein? Unlikely. A study recently published in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition* found that consuming a diet containing five and half times the Recommended Daily Allowance of protein has no effect on bodyweight, fat mass or body fat percentage. That means eating a lot of protein won't make you fat but lack of exercise and a poor diet will.

Sweet lychee: This prickly tropical fruit is packed with sweetness and loaded with nutrients. Blending up a shake with lychee is a great way to get your fill of vitamins B and C and potassium.

Cuckoo for coconuts: Coconut milk gives a creamy flavour to smoothies and provides plenty of hydrating potassium as well as medium-chain fatty acids that can help boost metabolism and increase feelings of satiety. It's also lactose-free.

Go green: Green tea contains more heath-boosting, fat-fighting catechins than any other tea around, making it a nutritional superstar for smoothies.

PHOTOS BY CORY SORENSEN • FOOD STYLING: RONNDA HAMILTON • PROP STYLING: CLAUDIA MONJE AND TARA THOMPSON

Stop Body Shaming



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Body Confidence Starts with You

BY **SUSAN ELLE HARMON**

There is a lot of talk about the term 'body shaming', with an abundance of comments in the media and on social media about people (especially women) being 'too fat' or 'too skinny'. When an image is put out into the media or social media world, it's open to scrutiny. For example, people will always have something to say about a plus-sized Sports Illustrated model, a noticeably thin or overweight celebrity or a proud, fit mum.

This starts a very important conversation about how to bridge the gap between motivation and shaming.

I've come to the conclusion that we all need to take responsibility for the way we talk to ourselves about our bodies. The word 'fat' has always been a bad word, but what about skinny?

I remember in high school people told me to "eat a hamburger." I didn't really take offence because I knew that kids teased. I developed a thick skin and learned to focus on how I looked and felt best.

It's not about what others say to us, it's about how we feel inside. So be confident and live your life!



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

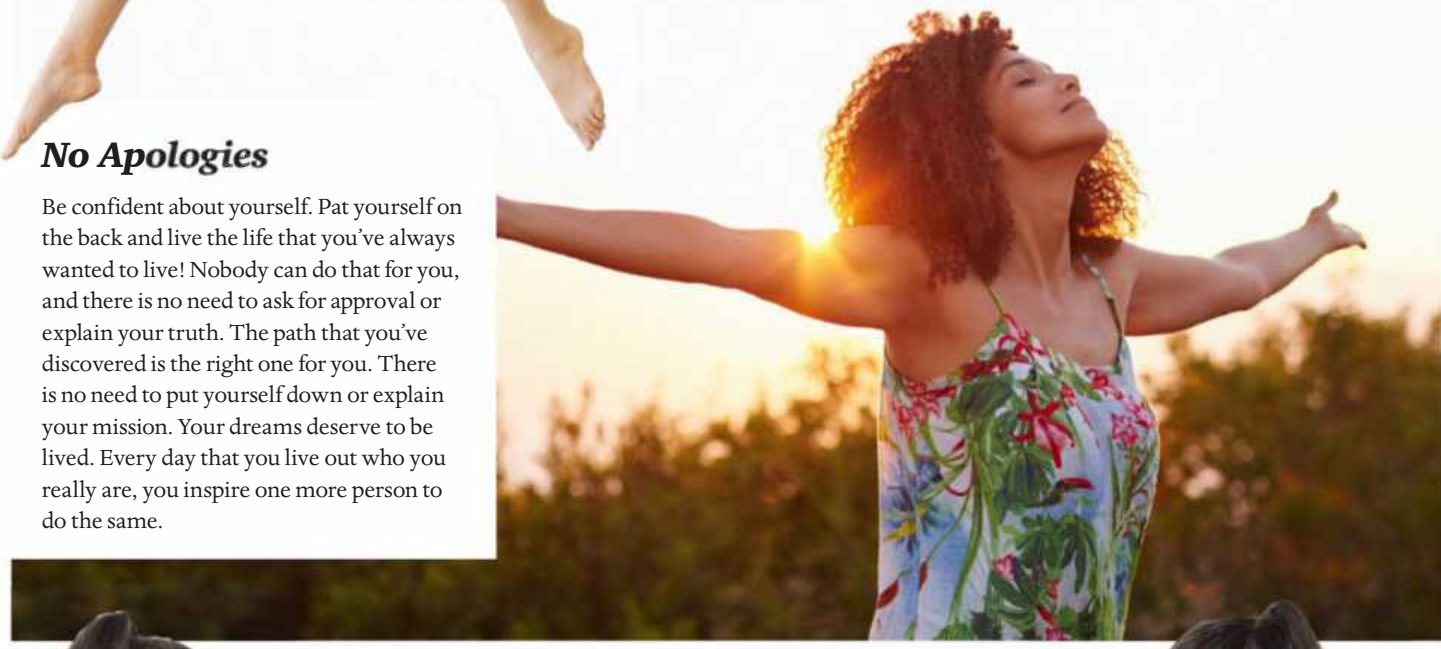
Body Confidence

It's not about the number on the scale or the size of your clothes. It's so important to recognise the journey and the joy in life. When you discover what exercise and meal plan works for you, things will start to come together. It's important to celebrate your success. Find joy in your exercise and diet, do workouts that are fun and find recipes that are healthy and balanced. Happiness shows, so love the body you have and you will start to look and feel better everyday.

"Happiness shows, so love the body you have and you will start to look and feel better every day."

No Apologies

Be confident about yourself. Pat yourself on the back and live the life that you've always wanted to live! Nobody can do that for you, and there is no need to ask for approval or explain your truth. The path that you've discovered is the right one for you. There is no need to put yourself down or explain your mission. Your dreams deserve to be lived. Every day that you live out who you really are, you inspire one more person to do the same.

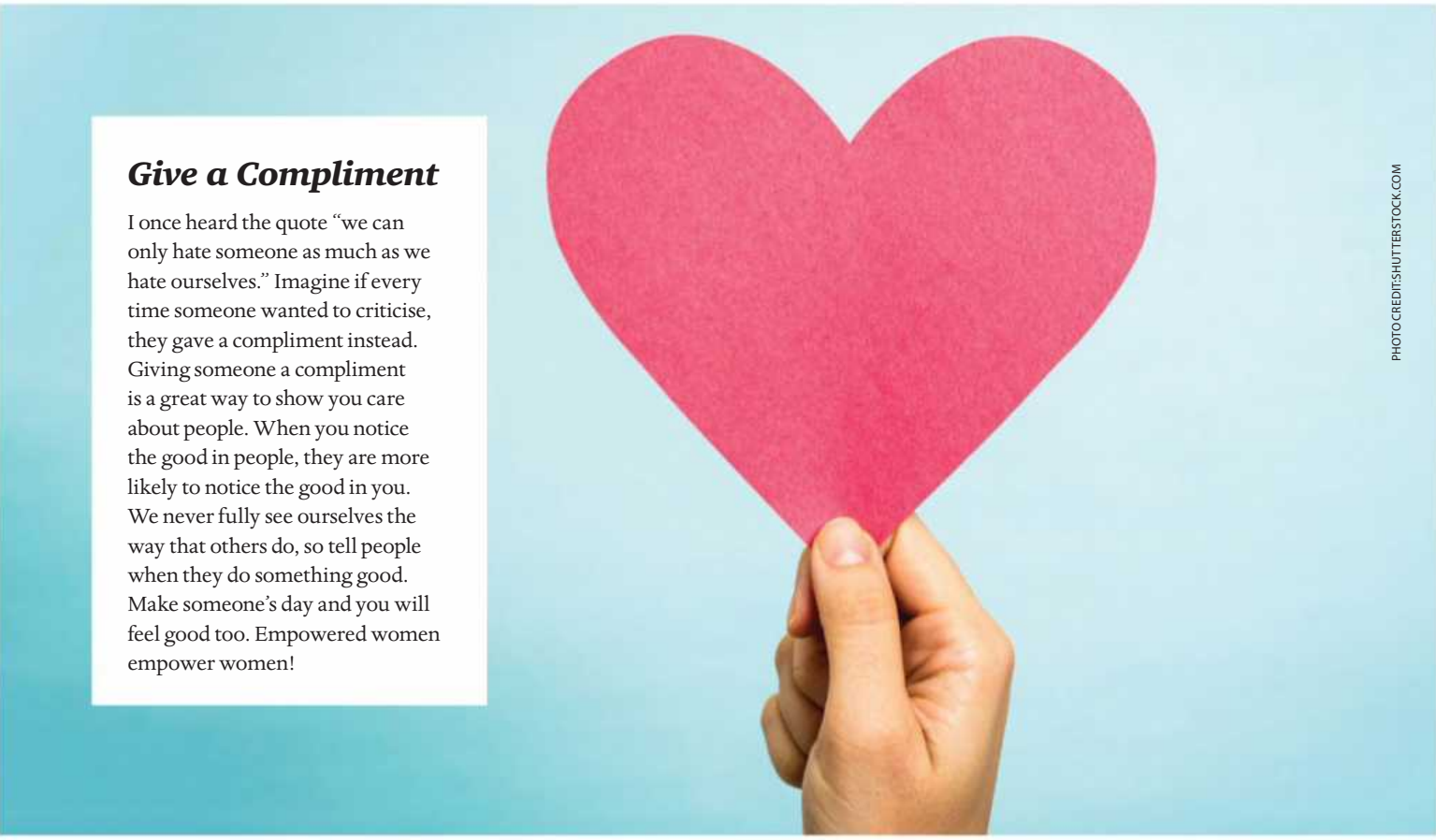




Get Out of Your Own Way

We are often our own worst critics. Being ruled by feeling inadequate is no way to live. When you give in to fear you will run away from your dreams. Having negative views of yourself is not healthy. Even if people around you criticise you, you have to believe in yourself and your dreams. Prove your beliefs wrong by making a case for yourself. Remember your accomplishments. Don't give in to what others might think of you. Go after what you want and evaluate the outcome after. Do the best you can and make the best decisions. Set smart goals, but don't get hung up on the small stuff.





Give a Compliment

I once heard the quote "we can only hate someone as much as we hate ourselves." Imagine if every time someone wanted to criticise, they gave a compliment instead. Giving someone a compliment is a great way to show you care about people. When you notice the good in people, they are more likely to notice the good in you. We never fully see ourselves the way that others do, so tell people when they do something good. Make someone's day and you will feel good too. Empowered women empower women!

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Be Inspirational

Educate yourself and set a good example of what you want to see. There are plenty of clueless people, who critique and analyse others - don't let yourself get to that point. Have a clear point of view and stay positive, even if you disagree with the direction of other people's lives. Share your story, don't analyse others, give compliments and change the way you talk to yourself. This will help stop body shaming at the core.



SUSAN ELLE HARMON

Susan is a personal trainer, commercial model and fitness nutrition specialist. She believes that being fit is not just a goal in life; it's a way of life. She helps to inspire others to live a healthy fit lifestyle, from daily activities, to an effective exercise routine, to the foods we eat. Having been a commercial model for over 10 years, she also shares tips for commercial models. For more information visit www.susanelleharmon.com

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“With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts.”
— ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

The Truth *about Health, Fitness and Motherhood*

STRUGGLING TO BALANCE YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS WITH YOUR OWN PERSONAL FITNESS GOALS? **YOU'RE NOT ALONE.**

BY **KELLY RENNIE**



PHOTO CREDIT: DALLAS OLSEN

BODY ACCEPTANCE AFTER PREGNANCY

I remember when I touched my belly after I had my first child. I was amazed at how soft and squashy it felt. I was so nervous that my tummy was never going to be seen as normal again. I felt incredibly weak, my breasts were sore and I had fat pockets around my body that I had never felt before.

After having two children in two years, now aged three and one and a half, I have noticed a few things about my pregnancies which I'm sure many other women can relate to.

KELLY RENNIE

Kelly is an international coach, fitness model, author of The Fit Mummy Manual and creator of the No.1 Busy Mum Program. She is a mother to two gorgeous girls, Nevaeh and Eden, and aims to empower mums across the world with her holistic approach to life, mindset and health. For more information visit www.busymumfitness.com, and you can find her on Facebook: kellyrenniefitnessmodel or Instagram: kellyrenniefit

While we may not realise it, there are some realities we have to come to terms with once we bring our bundles of joy into the world. These can include:

- **Guilt:** Taking time out for ourselves is hard. We can feel a sense of responsibility to always be there and take care of our newborns. At the same time we also know that we want our health back so we have the strength and energy to be the best mum possible.
- **Weakness:** Recovery time varies depending on the person, however for us fit girls, finding patience can be hard. We are left feeling weaker than before and cannot simply return to the gym the next day and lift as heavy as we could before pregnancy. If we have abdominal separation or other problems post-pregnancy, it can take months to recover.

I remember after my second pregnancy my body took months to recover. Due to the Symphysis Pubis Dysfunction (SPD) I struggled to do any heavy weights with my lower body and felt inferior to others in the gym, especially considering my background in fitness. My core took a lot longer to come back and my pelvic floor needed working on a daily basis for the first eight weeks.

FIT MUM TIPS

Implement these tips into your daily routine. They'll help you get started, get back on track, and stay motivated through the process of reclaiming your body.



1\\ Recognise Your Emotions and Stress

If you can recognise your stress and deal with your emotions around early motherhood you'll be able to get better results with your fitness and health. So many mums start the 'Monday Diet', get to Wednesday, something stressful happens and they revert to old habits. If times are challenging, learn to stop and use some deep breathing techniques or have a little word to yourself about how you should handle the situation. Easier said than done, I know, but just being mindful of this will help you going forward. Make sure you don't take your stress out on food either, using food as an emotional crutch will only see your waistline grow. Fill the void with healthier options.



2\\ Set Your Goals and Measure Your Progress

Doesn't matter how small your goals are, having them will help you stay motivated and give you the consistency you need to get the results. An ideal place to start is with something simple like your hydration. Then you can tackle your nutrition and then of course, exercise. Keeping hydrated is essential during times of stress. Water works wonders, coffee doesn't!

Make sure all your friends and family know what you are doing so they can support you. You will need a helping hand, so this is a must.



Simple things to measure like your energy levels, inches lost and how your clothes fit will give you small wins to keep you motivated.

3\\ Focus on Nutrient-Dense Food

When you feed your body what it needs, you'll find you won't crave as much. Each meal should be filled with lots of nutrients and it doesn't have to be time-consuming, either. Make extra for dinner then eat it for lunch the next day.

If you are breastfeeding, remember you are still losing lots of nutrients and need the extra calories – but it's where you get those calories from that counts! Make sure your meals are filled with food that will help you replace those nutrients: lots of fish, lean meats, healthy fats, vegetables and complex carbs.



4\\ Make Fitness For You

Time is the number one excuse that mums have when it comes to implementing a routine of any sort. Start your training at home, in the lounge where it's convenient. It doesn't have to be an hour long, in fact as little as 10 minutes can be a good starting point. Do it before your kids wake up, while they're asleep or at childcare. If you can't get the motivation, joining an online program can help, or find a local mothers group to see you through the challenging times and get you moving again.

ICON CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Make Health Your Lifestyle

Get the whole family involved with health and fitness. Our kids learn from us, they eat what we eat and they are motivated by what we do. Whether it's getting them to join in with cooking dinner, outside for a run around the playground, swim in the sea or jump rope in the backyard. Getting together and doing it as a family will set the foundations for their future.

"HELP! I just can't stick to my eating plan"

*It's okay **not to be able to stick to a meal plan** that someone else gave you. Here's why.* BY JOANNE CUGNET

OK, SO YOU'VE BEEN DOING YOUR BEST TO EAT 'CLEAN'. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT FOODS IN THEIR MOST NATURAL FORM WITH ZILCH, OR FEW CHEMICALS ADDED, ARE THE BEST ONES FOR YOU. SO FAR YOU'VE STUCK TO IT. You're feeling increasingly energised and your body is looking leaner! But you're missing some of the not-so-clean foods.

You're not craving them, but you'd like to incorporate just a little into your eating plan. The only thing stopping you is your fear that you are doing the wrong thing, that you're putting your health and looks at risk. Plus, isn't it a sign of self-disrespect to not commit fully to eating clean? You're afraid of letting yourself down but you just don't know if you can be that good with food. You feel stuck and you don't know what to do.

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

It's a sticky situation when you are faced with a potential choice that you may fear is going to compromise your well-being. But then the other side is you just don't feel it is completely realistic for you. In fact there is part of you that is just not willing to be so self-sacrificing.

But there is that nagging voice in your head saying that you're worth the effort. That looking good 'tastes' better than processed foods and that if you truly loved yourself you wouldn't even contemplate putting average quality food into your body. The anxiety, uncertainty and indecision generated is immense.

You can see the quandary here and the inner conflict is unpleasant.

So what do you do when you feel the pressure to eat so well is actually causing you such stress?

When your fear of letting yourself down is causing you to feel guilty for even thinking about eating poorer quality food?

Let's get some answers to these questions, because feeling such agitation I know is not fun!

Firstly, say to yourself: "It's not worth feeling guilty about food!"

Secondly, it's not worth trying to be perfect with something if it just doesn't feel or fit comfortably with you.

Thirdly, decide on a balance of great versus not-so-great food that feels right for you. Regardless of what anyone else says, it has to work for you. If it doesn't, you may become so discouraged that you throw out the practice of clean eating altogether - and you deserve better than that.

Fourthly, be willing to be at peace with your decision and enjoy the experience.

Fifthly, be willing to 'love the skin you are in' as you settle into your new food choices. Don't beat yourself up if your body changes slightly. It will still be awesome in its own right.

It is wiser for the long term to be honest and realistic with yourself. By so doing you'll be infinitely more dedicated to your clean eating because you allow yourself an acceptable degree of flexibility.

From there food, and your eating, can be a joy for now and always!

"It is wiser for the long term to be honest and realistic with yourself."



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

ABOUT JOANNE CUGNET

Joanne is an intuitive counsellor and fitness industry writer. She will teach you to love the skin you are in and shape yourself from the inside out. Joanne offers a unique blend of mindset and eating strategies that will support you to release any old unconscious, self-sabotage that prevents you from loving yourself and your body. Find out more or contact Joanne via **www.joanneprior.com**

Love it or Leave it

Energise your exercise

BY **CLAIRE JOHNSON**

ARE YOU ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO ANNOY OTHERS WITH YOUR ENERGY FOR WORKING OUT? Or are you someone who has to drag yourself to the gym, hates every second being there, yet you feel grateful once it's finished that you made it?

I'm a notorious people watcher, I love to sit and observe human interaction and behaviours - so I find the gym environment an amazing place to view a wide spectrum of emotions. I love hearing the noise of someone pounding away on the treadmill as they sprint towards a new personal best. And a little grunting in the weights area is acceptable as it highlights the effort someone is putting in. These people are not just going through the motions: they've not only decided to show up for their workout but are determined make it count.



PHOTO CREDIT:SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



PHOTO CREDIT:SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

When I see friendly greetings and springs in steps I, too, get excited by the obvious enthusiasm; how can you not? They say that laughter is infectious. Well, so is energy. Can you remember the last time you were around a young child who was running around, loving every moment with a big grin on their face? I can pretty much guarantee that you were wearing one too and that's how exercise should make you feel – childlike and free!

When we were younger, our energy was limitless and there was enjoyment in our activities, whether it be riding a bike, playing at the park or messing about at the beach; it was always performed with happiness. How did it go from being fun and enlightening to a chore and hard work?

Far too often I see people looking miserable as they robotically go through the motions without any effort just to tick a box and 'get it done'. This is not a workout; this is making yourself sad, and creating negative energy which is even unhealthier than not working out at all! Think of your physiology and feelings when you receive some sad news and then compare it with how you feel when you win something. These emotional states affect your health at a cellular level and I know I'd rather ensure my happy moments outweigh the sad ones.

Life is too short to punish yourself at the gym. We get thrown enough curveballs as it is without adding to our distress, so why do it if you don't love it?

Exercise should be enjoyable and whilst a little bit of rewarding discomfort is acceptable, the workout should be pain-free. You should feel motivated and happy rather than hateful and judgemental, including towards yourself. Check your attitude as you enter to ensure you are not setting yourself up for a tough workout before you even begin. Tell yourself you can do this, you do enjoy it and be proud of your accomplishments.

Energy creates energy which creates your emotions. There is nothing more satisfying than the sense of achievement when you run a little further, lift a little stronger and dig that bit deeper. Of course I understand it can be a struggle to get started and not every day it will feel easy at first, yet I fully believe that if it's worth doing, it's worth giving it your best. After all, why would you give anything less?

top tips to energise your exercise

- Create a pumping playlist that makes you want to move
- Wear bright clothes that make you feel good
- Find what you love and do more of it
- Partner with a coach who inspires you and helps you to progress
- Buddy up with a friend or another regular gym-goer and keep each other on track
- Eliminate excuses and set regular compelling goals



CLAIRE JOHNSON

CJ is passionate about creating a disease-free world through healthy eating and exercise. She is a nutrition and fitness specialist and an International Academy of Physique Conditioning (IAPC) qualified trainer. CJ has worked in the health and fitness industry across a few continents, providing nutrition and fitness programs to individuals and groups. She has also embarked in the figure body world, competing at state and national levels.



FELICIA ROMERO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **TONY MANDARICH**

FAST FACTS

City: **Gilbert, Arizona, USA**
Occupation: **Owner of Felicia Romero's Fit Method**
Age: **33**
Height: **160cm**
Weight: **57kg**
Instagram: **feliciaromero**
Website: **www.FRfitmethod.com**

DIET

MEAL 1: 4 hard boiled eggs, ½ cup steel-cut oats, 1 tbsp coconut oil

MEAL 2: Quest bar

MEAL 3: ½ cup jasmine rice, 5 egg whites and ½ avocado

MEAL 4: 115g turkey, ¼ cup cashews, 1 cup veggies

MEAL 5: 145g salmon, 1 cup veggies and 85g sweet potato

Oxygen *chats with* celebrity trainer, seven-time fitness cover model, motivational speaker and IFBB Figure Pro *Felicia Romero.*

Q/ Hi Felicia, can you start by telling us why you became interested in health and fitness?

I have always been active but I decided to take it to the next level after I signed up for a competition. Although I'd always worked out, this decision allowed me to work out for a specific reason and goal. Setting goals is important to me; once I set a goal I make sure to stick to it and don't give up. Learning how to weight train and shape the body interested me, and when I started seeing changes it motivated me even more.

Q/ Do you remember your first training session?

Yes, I used to only train one body part at a time and would spend hours in the gym when I was younger. It was a very conventional type of training. Now I train using full-body circuits and HIIT. I feel so much better now; I am healthy and feel strong.

Q/ What has been the most rewarding aspect of training for you?

The most rewarding aspect is the way it makes me feel mentally and helps to fight my depression and anxiety. It can change my mood in an instant.

Q/ What have you had to overcome to get to where you are today?

I have had to overcome focusing on the physical and being perfect. I have learned to accept my body. I used to be so hard on myself if I took a bite of something or didn't get a workout in. I am a lot easier on myself now.

Q/ What has continued to motivate you throughout your training?

The constant reminder of how good I feel after I am done. It is part of my routine and ritual.

Q/ What is the number one lesson you have learned about health and fitness?

Be consistent and find a balance; it will help to create happiness and peace in your life.

Q/ What do you wish you had known when you were 16?

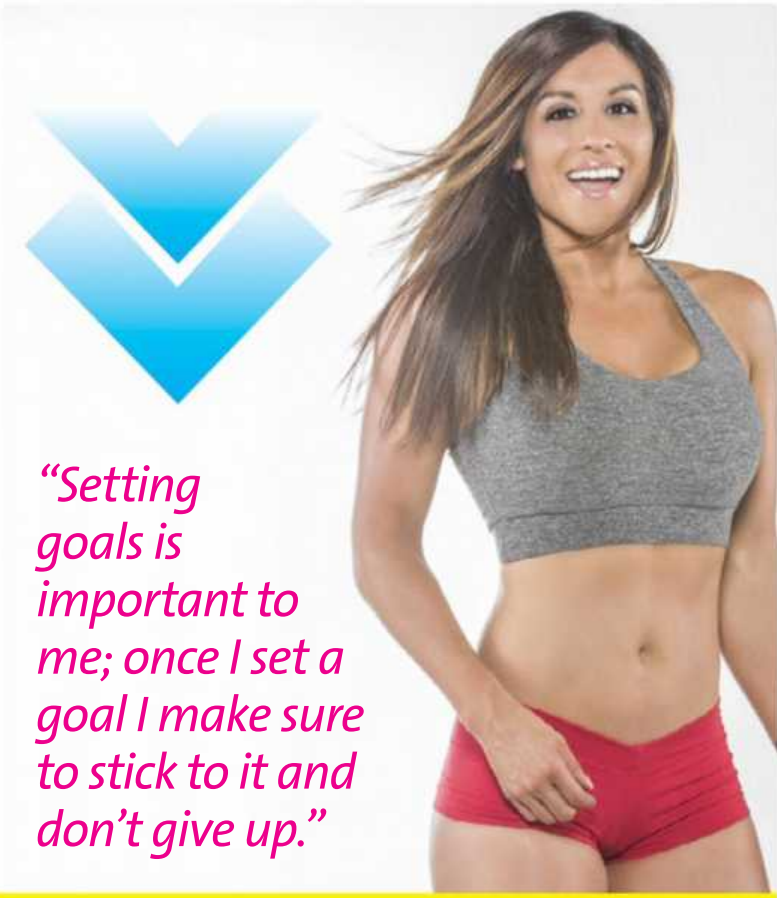
Not to worry so much. Worrying does not solve anything, the outcome will still be the same whether you worry or not.

Q/ What advice would you give to women wanting to get into the best shape of their life?

Have a plan and stick to it. Don't live by excuses. Also, don't compare yourself to others; it will only make you go crazy if you are not progressing as fast or much as someone else. Everyone is different.

Q/ We all have days where motivation is low – how do you overcome these?

I regroup and maybe take a couple of days to rest and find my fire again. Sometimes a day or two off helps to create that motivation.



"Setting goals is important to me; once I set a goal I make sure to stick to it and don't give up."

WORKOUT WEEK

Monday: Full-body HIIT

Tuesday: Yoga and spin

Wednesday: TRX training

Thursday: Rest day

Friday: Yoga

Saturday: Full-body HIIT

Sunday: Bike ride or hike

taking

Unilateral training does more than improve your posture. Learn some of the benefits of practising a one-sided workout, and add these eight fresh new moves to your toolbox.

BY LARA McGLASHAN, MFA, CPT, FITNESS EDITOR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CORY SORENSEN



sides

Your body is used to taking sides — you're right- or left-handed, right- or left-footed, right- or left-brained. But your preference for sidedness could mean muscular imbalances that lead to impaired results and possible injury down the line. Even trainees who practise perfect form can develop imbalances due in part to genetic kinesiology. (Thanks, mum and dad!)

But injury prevention aside, unilateral training has a host of benefits — illustrated below — that you might not have known about, and anyone at any level can improve her form, function and results by adding this sort of training to her regimen. ›››

››› What's so great about it?

- **It recruits more muscles:** Unilateral training demands more from your joints, stabilising muscles and connective tissues to steady you as you move a load from point A to point B. Additional muscular recruitment means you build greater all-over strength, which translates into accelerated results and better injury prevention.
- **It improves contralateral strength:** The word "contralateral" pertains to the same muscles on opposite sides of the body — i.e., your right pec vs. your left pec. Studies have shown that work done on one side of the body not only benefits the muscle being worked but also the contralateral muscle on the opposite side of the body — even if that muscle remains untrained. So in the instance of your pecs, if you do a one-arm dumbbell bench press with your right side, your left pec will still reap the benefits with up to 50 per cent gains in terms of strength. Crazy, right?
- **It provides a crunch-free core workout:** Unilateral movements stress only one side of the body, forcing you to compensate for this uneven load distribution by activating your core muscles. Your core works as an anti-rotation device in this instance, dynamically stabilising your lower back and hips, preventing you from twisting and torqueing.
- **It enhances proprioception:** There is a learning curve associated with unilateral training, and you hone your balance and coordination in order to properly perform an exercise. This means better overall kinetic activity throughout your body and improved performance in the gym and on the playing field.
- **It corrects imbalances:** No one wants to be walking around with one arm or leg bigger than the other, so to bring up lagging parts, unilateral training is your best friend. Improving strength in contralateral muscles relative to one another also means that no muscle is a weak link and that the risk of injury is diminished.

THE MOVES

You're probably familiar with most of the typical one-handed or one-legged moves, so to help stuff your training toolbox, we've come up with some unique and unusual ways to train your separate halves. Blend these moves into your regular training routine, or do a couple of weeks of one-sided training to throw your body a curveball.



1

One-arm TRX biceps curl

Set-up: Make the TRX straps fairly short so you can hold both handles in one hand at ear level with your arm bent 90 degrees, palm facing your head. Stand sideways to the anchor with your feet together, opposite hand on hip. Lean away from the anchor until your arm is fully extended.

Move: Keeping your body straight and steady, bend your elbow and pull yourself up by curling your biceps until you come to standing. Slowly uncurl your arm and return to the start. Do all reps on one side before switching.

Tip: **The greater your angle of lean-away from the TRX, the more challenging the move becomes. Play with your distance and angle to make the move easier or harder.**

One-arm Swiss-ball dumbbell chest press

Set-up: Lie face-up on a Swiss ball so your upper back and shoulders are supported, and lift your hips to come in line with your knees. Hold a dumbbell at your chest with your palm facing forward, elbow bent and flared out in line with your shoulder. Spread your feet wide for stability and place your hand on your hip.

Move: Press the dumbbell upward by extending your arm until it's straight. Slowly lower to the start and repeat right away. Complete all reps on one side before switching.

Tip: **Don't allow the ball to roll around. Cinch down your abs and control your hips to keep it steady as you move the weight.**



2

MODEL: LINDSAY PRICE • HAIR AND MAKEUP: NANCY JAMBAZIAN • FITNESS CLOTHING: MODEL'S OWN





3

One-arm dumbbell cross-body triceps extension
Set-up: Lie face-up on a flat bench with your back arching naturally, and hold a dumbbell in one hand with your arm straight up over your shoulder, palm facing forward.
Move: Keeping your upper arm perpendicular to the floor, bend your elbow and slowly lower the dumbbell down and across your body toward your opposite shoulder. When it touches or nearly touches your shoulder, reverse the move and raise the weight back to the start, squeezing hard as you reach the top. Do all reps on one side before switching.
Tip: **Actively contract the lat on the working side to help stabilise your shoulder and control your upper arm.**

One-arm lawn-mower dumbbell row
Set-up: Take a split stance with your left foot forward and hold a dumbbell in your right hand. Bend forward from your hip with a straight back and place your left hand on your left thigh, with your right arm hanging straight down to the floor, palm facing inward.
Move: Row the dumbbell upward by driving your elbow toward the ceiling. As you reach the top of your range of motion, continue the pull by twisting your torso and shoulders and opening your chest to the right. Uncoil and return the way you came to the start. Do all reps on one side before switching.
Tip: **Make this motion smooth and controlled, not jerky and explosive like a real lawn mower!**

4





"Additional muscular recruitment means you build greater all-over strength, which translates into accelerated results and better injury prevention."

No-touch skater lunge
Set-up: Stand on your left foot with your right knee bent, foot lifted behind you, knee flared out.
Move: Bend your standing leg and squat down, tracking your knee over your toes and keeping your hips square as you reach your arms to the left side. Simultaneously reach your right foot behind you and to the left side to counter-balance your weight, but don't let it touch the floor. Stand back up to the start and repeat right away. Do all reps on one side before switching.
Tip: **If you have trouble balancing, touch your toe lightly on the floor.**



5



One-legged Bosu squat
Set-up: Stand on the dome of a Bosu and lift one foot. Extend your arms to the side and focus on a spot on the floor several feet in front of you. Tighten your abs and square your hips.
Move: Slowly bend your knee and squat down as low as you can, keeping your chest lifted and your shoulders back. Feel free to move your arms forward or to the side to help balance, as shown. Extend your leg to return to the start. Do all reps on one side before switching.
Tip: **Your ankle will work double time here to keep you steady on an unstable surface. Split your sets into smaller groups of reps to prevent burnout of those tiny muscles.**

6









7

Single-legged deadlift windmill
Set-up: Stand on your right foot with your left leg behind you. Extend your arms out to the sides at shoulder height.
Move: Keeping your back straight, hinge at the hips and fold forward while simultaneously lifting your left leg up behind you. As you descend, slowly open your chest to the right side, reaching your left fingers for your right toes and your right fingers for the sky. Slowly return to the start. Do all reps on one side before switching.
Tip: **Bend your standing knee slightly to help maintain balance and prevent strain in the back of your knee.**





8

One-arm dumbbell push press
Set-up: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Hold a dumbbell at your shoulder with your palm facing forward, elbow down.
Move: Bend your knees slightly to load up, then extend them quickly and push through your heels and glutes, using that power and slight momentum to press the dumbbell straight up over your shoulder to a full extension. Lower it slowly back to the start and repeat right away. Do all reps on one side before switching.
Tip: **This is a dynamic move and should involve more than simply your shoulder to execute.**

Physically Fit! How about emotionally fit?

How emotionally fit are you?

BY **ANDRIANA ELEZOVICH**



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Have you ever looked into how 'emotionally fit' you are?

YOU MAY ASK 'WHAT EXACTLY DOES EMOTIONALLY FIT MEAN?' WELL, ASK YOURSELF HOW YOU FEEL IN TIMES OF STRESS. Are you in control of your stress levels and are you able to control your emotions when times are tough? Are you able to maintain satisfying relationships, deal with conflict and remain grounded during stressful times without it playing havoc on your emotional health?

Sounds easier said than done, right?

We all deal with stress in different ways but did you know that if we are 'emotionally fit' during these stressful times, we will cope better and it won't set our health to kilter! You might say "but I work out every day. I'm strong, I'm fit, I'm healthy!" While being physically fit will certainly benefit each of us during stressful times, 'emotional fitness' is a different type of fitness altogether.

If we don't take the time to develop stress management techniques, our emotional health can deteriorate.

EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE

The emotional baggage we hold onto can actually be stored in our gut as well as other places in the body. I've heard it over and over again "I'm working out all the time, I'm eating right but I can't shift the weight from my stomach". My response: "that's not weight. You are emotionally bloated."

If this sounds like you, ask yourself: what's bugging you? Like really bugging you?

Whatever it is that you're holding onto - whether it's guilt, fear, blame, control, anger… own it. Allow your emotions to come to the surface and then let them go. You can run kilometres day and night, and squat until your legs can't hold you up any more - but if you don't surrender to what it is that you're emotionally tied to, that muffin top isn't going anywhere!

Move forward with life, not against it. Let go. Shake off the emotional hurt, regret or whatever else it is that you may be holding onto and see what happens. With relaxation, nurturing, self-love and stress management techniques and owning pent-up emotions, slowly but surely the dreaded bloat melts away.

The link between unresolved negative emotions and disease is undeniable! Emotional fitness has no end stage and is a continual process of change and growth so taking the time to tap into your emotions often, is vital for our health, longevity and wellbeing.

"Chronic emotional stress can wreak havoc on your mind and body."



EMOTIONALLY FIT

Life will throw us curve balls and we will all go though adversity, some more than others, but how we react to these life experiences affects our emotional health both in mind, body and spirit.

Now, you must note that being physically fit does not mean you may be emotionally fit. Sure, exercising regularly will certainly create self-discipline and awareness, motivation and strength, not to mention a fantastic form of stress release as we pound out our frustrations on the treadmill, but emotions alone are very powerful when it comes to overall health.

Have you ever had an argument with your loved one before getting to the gym or to work and your emotions are flying off the radar? You can't settle and focus. Your emotional state is in disharmony so you leave the gym or your workplace as your motivation now just isn't there. It's all due to poor energy and lack of emotional control.

I'm not saying that we should take these encounters lightly, as having compassion and understanding is first and foremost in our relationships and in ourselves, but having control of your stress response will supersede the hurt and allow a better outcome in a difficult situation. If we are not emotionally fit and strong, our minds are not focused, our physical and mental health declines and our spirits are unable to thrive.

If we don't learn how to nurture and develop emotional awareness, the long-term activation of the stress-response system and the subsequent overexposure to cortisol and other stress hormones can disrupt almost all your body's processes. This puts you at increased risk of numerous health problems, including:

- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Digestive problems
- ☐ Heart disease
- ☐ Sleep problems
- ☐ Weight gain
- ☐ Memory and concentration impairment

Chronic emotional stress can wreak havoc on your mind and body.

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

HOW TO BECOME



Just like a new exercise regime, it may take some getting used to. However, by following these steps you will be taking control of your stress and working on becoming emotionally fit.

1. Be an optimist

Stay positive, think big and set your mind on achieving new and exciting goals. Don't stress on negativity and think "I can't", "it won't happen to me", "I have no luck" or "I tried once, I'm not trying again". Have hope and faith in yourself to achieve all that you set your mind to. Change your attitude to "I will" and "I can". Don't stress and think how hard it will be. Go confidently in the direction of your dreams and enjoy the journey along the way. Optimism is key.

2. Self-acceptance:

Have confidence and accept yourself for who you are and how wonderful you are in your own right. Don't compare yourself to others. We are all so uniquely different and beautiful. Not everyone will like you and that is ok. Don't take things personally. Take the time to be alone. Knowing how to be solitary is central to the art of self-love. Keep working on the best version of you with self-compassion, self-worth and - all importantly - with self-love. You will be amazed how much stress is released when you stop comparing yourself to others.

"You can run kilometres day and night, and squat until your legs can't hold you up any more - but if you don't surrender to what it is that you're emotionally tied to, that muffin top isn't going anywhere!"

3. Take time out:

We are all so consumed by work, family and other commitments that we don't allow ourselves some time out. Take up meditation, have a bubble bath, do a yoga class, get a massage, read a motivational book, take a 'sun bath' etc. Even if it's just ten minutes, find the time; the rewards are so worth it that it becomes addictive! Silence is luxurious. Allow your mind to let go of what is and what was. Become present. Feel your feelings. It's not selfish to take time out to love and take care of our selves. It centres us and allows us to refocus and check into our thoughts and emotions. We need to slow down, rest, check in to how we are really feeling and give ourselves some much needed TLC without any distractions. Allocate this important 'down time' with yourself, just like you would do with any other appointment. Schedule it in. Lock it in and lock it in often! It's time for some much needed stress-free Zen.

4. Express gratitude:

Give thanks to what you have in your life. Life won't always be rosy but there is always something to be grateful for. The real gift of gratitude is that the more grateful you are, the more present you become. Gratitude is the vitamin for the soul.

PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

EMOTIONALLY FIT





PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

5. Embrace mindfulness:

Take a step back in your busy day and become present. Especially when it's a really, really busy day as this is when we most need to be mindful. Be mindful in your thoughts and in what you say. Use daily affirmations to reprogram thoughts, feelings, surroundings. Be mindful of what you eat. Eat to nourish, fuel and replenish your body. Drop the coffee and drink copious amounts of water. Your body and your mind will love you for it.

6. Balance:

Ask yourself "how can I create more balance in my life?" In the words of Rachel Brathen: Balance is key in everything you do. Dance all night long and practise yoga the next day. Drink wine, but don't forget your green juice. Eat chocolate when your heart wants it and kale salad when your body needs it. Wear high heels on Saturday and walk barefoot on Sunday. Go shopping at the mall and then sit down and meditate in your bedroom. Live high and low. Move and stay still. Embrace all sides of who you are and live your authentic truth! Be brave and bold and spontaneous and loud and let that complement your ability to find silence and patience and modesty and peace. Aim for balance. Make your own rules and don't let others tell you how to live according to theirs.

7. Stay connected:

Surround yourself with those that bring out the best in you. Connect to those that inspire you and motivate you to your fullest potential. If there are toxic relationships in your life, remove them. Toxic = stress. You have every right to live your life as stress-free as possible. Aim for a life of peace, love, health, harmony and happiness.

8. Don't be afraid to seek help:

If times are tough, speak to someone you can trust or seek professional counselling when needed. This is a wonderful opportunity in gaining tools and techniques to live a successful stress-free and emotionally fit life.



ANDRIANA ELEZOVICH

Having been a fitness professional for 14 years, Andriana specialises in women's weight loss, health, wellbeing, athletic conditioning, body sculpting and functional fitness. Her passion for all things health and fitness began 20 years ago and she loves watching others achieve their health and fitness goals. She is a certified personal master trainer, group fitness manager and instructor and Les Mills instructor. She also has 12 years experience in martial arts, a diploma in clinical nutrition and is a certified professional model. She believes a physically fit body is fundamental to a strong, happy, confident life, and that growth in mind, body and spirit is paramount to a happier life!

Second, Third, But Never First

AFTER 11 YEARS OF COMPETING AND NEVER WINNING A SHOW, VESNA FOUND INSPIRATION IN A SAD SITUATION, CHANGED HER MINDSET AND TOOK OUT HER VERY OWN TITLE. BY **KIRSTIN CUTHBERT**

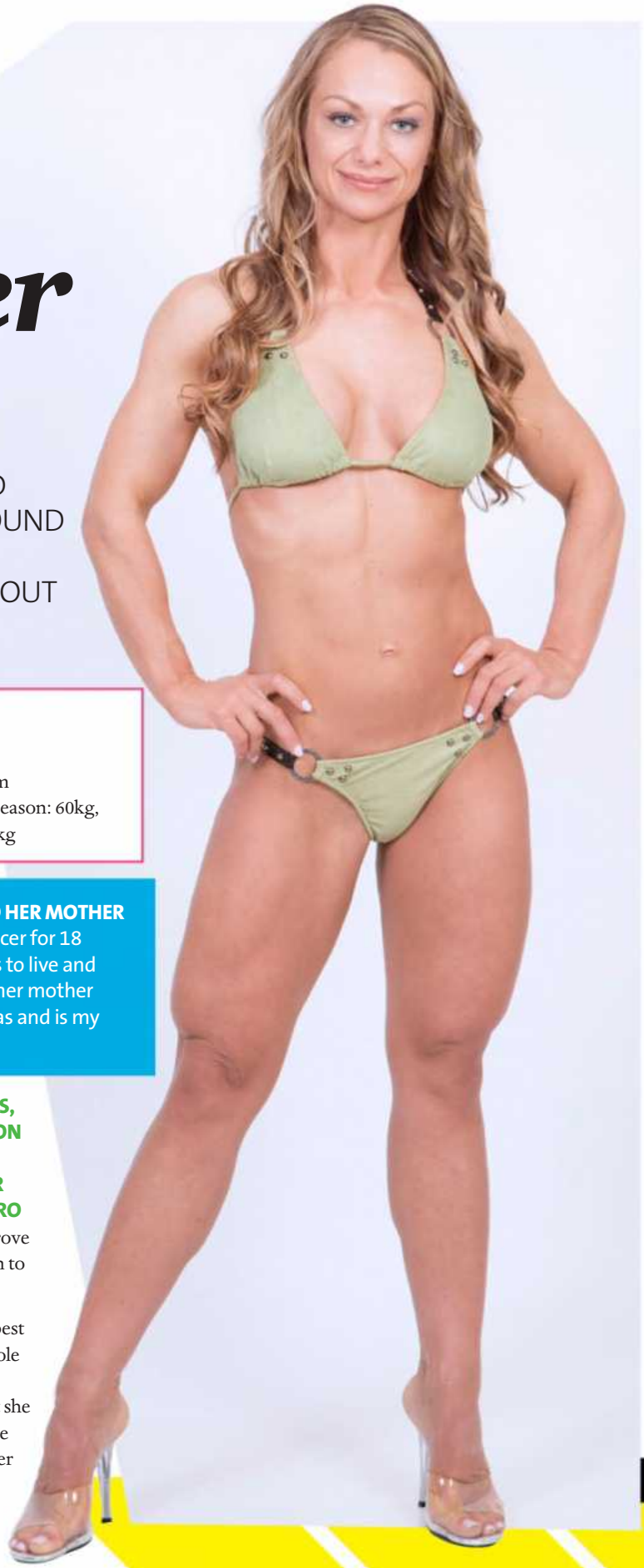


PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERTO DURAN PHOTOGRAPHY

FAST FACTS

Name: Vesna Kouzan
City: Sydney, NSW
Occupation: Nutrition and strength coach
Age: 37
Height: 170cm
Weight: On-season: 60kg, Off-season 68kg

VESNA WOULD LIKE TO DEDICATE THIS ARTICLE TO HER MOTHER GEORGINA KOUZAN. She lived with pancreatic cancer for 18 months after being told she only had three months to live and sadly passed away in September 2014. Vesna says her mother fought the disease as long as she could and "she was and is my strength, forever."

VESNA KOUZAN HAS BEEN COMPETING FOR 11 YEARS, ALWAYS PLACING SECOND OR THIRD - SHE NEVER WON THE SHOW. WHEN HER MOTHER WAS DIAGNOSED WITH PANCREATIC CANCER, SHE SLOWED DOWN HER TRAINING AND BEGAN TO LOSE SIGHT OF HER IFBB PRO CARD GOAL. She gave her mum all of her free time and drove six hours each week for two years with two young children to be by her side.

When her mother sadly passed away in September 2014, Vesna took inspiration from her mum's fight and put it into a fight of her very own – to no longer place second or third, this time she would place first.

Vesna's mother was her best friend and number one role model. Once she passed away, Vesna realised that she too could do anything she put her mind to, just as her mother did.

"She wanted me to be the best I could be and to never stop dreaming. My goal is to be the daughter she wanted me to be, the best version of me," she says.

Standing on stage only a few months after her mother's passing, filled with so much strength, passion and love for the sport, Vesna took out the IFBB Australasian Open Figure 2015.

"It was a huge win for me for many reasons I can't even explain in words, and was a pivotal point for me in my life and my training. It was a real dream come true, especially after competing for over 11 years and never a win. It was starting to feel like first place was out of reach for me," she says.

Today she preps with true passion and love for the sport. While she thought she had this before, it was nothing compared to how she is today.

"I don't complain about missing out on treats while prepping for a show. I don't care if others are going out socialising or sleeping in while I'm training morning and night for months on end. I'm grateful that I have the luxury to follow my dreams," she says.

Competing has always been a true passion for Vesna, and this is the main reason she continued to step on stage even though she never placed first.

"Even though I never won, this never deterred me. I'd watched girls with one or two years of competing experience winning and this just made me push even harder," she says.

"I never gave up on my dream of one day bringing home a winning trophy for my two children."

Although she has trained with weights for most of her life and always been active, her relationship with food has been difficult in the past.

"My weight fluctuated due to restricted fad diets. I'd often go on binges due to the prolonged restriction, which I'm sure many can relate to. It was a vicious cycle and has taken me years to overcome," she says.

"My relationship with food is more positive these days. I now eat to improve my overall health rather than for the sole reason of looking good on the beach."

Often asked how she does it all – and has for so long – Vesna tells people she is just like a surfer who wakes up early every day to surf, even when it's cold outside.

"I do what I do not because I have to but because I love it. I love my time in the gym and I always have since I was a little girl," she says.

She believes that nutrition and training programs are not sustainable unless you can enjoy them, and encourages others to find joy and reason in their goals too.

"You need to find the real reason for wanting to get into the best shape of your life. It shouldn't be for another person or a superficial purpose," she says.

"Make sure you set your goals and work towards reaching those goals with each rep and set you do. And don't forget to have fun while you train, it shouldn't feel like a chore."

Next time you feel like you can't do something, Vesna encourages you to think about those who wish they could follow their dreams and hopes this will inspire you to go after yours.

"Never do anything half-hearted; give yourself to everything you do so that you don't look back and say that you could have done more," she says.

> "Never do anything half-hearted; give yourself to everything you do."



Vesna at the 2015 IFBB Australasians where she placed first in Open Figure.





BOTTOM TWO PHOTOS PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERTO DURAN PHOTOGRAPHY | BLACK PHOTO CREDIT: ALLAN VELLA

SUMMER IS HERE - SO PUT DOWN YOUR WARM BOWL OF PORRIDGE AND PICK UP A NOURISHING AND REFRESHING SMOOTHIE BOWL.

Smoothie Bowls 101

PHOTOGRAPHY AND WORDS BY **REBECCA NEALE**



REBECCA NEALE

Rebecca is an Australian fitness and health professional, foodie and writer with eight years of experience as a personal trainer and online performance coach in and outside of Australia. She is a whole-foods advocate who strongly believes that good health and wellbeing begins within you, from good nutrition and a beautiful mindset. Rebecca thrives on teaching and inspiring others to find their own true balance and is very passionate about making a positive impact on the world around her.
Rebecca is currently completing a Bachelor degree in Nutritional Science and Dietetics to continue her journey of helping others to reach their full potential.

There's no denying the growing trend of smoothie bowls. All you have to do is open your Instagram or Pinterest and you'll see everyone you know hopping on board the smoothie bowl bandwagon – and so they should be! Smoothie bowls - which I have renamed the bowl of goodness for many obvious reasons - are amazing for you.



Traditions say to eat in harmony with the seasons, consuming warmer meals in the winter s and sticking to lighter, cooling foods through the summertime. As you probably already know, smoothies are perfect after a beach trip or run on a hot summer's morning. They are so fresh and such an easy way to refuel and nourish the body.

If you're yet to convert your beloved smoothie to a smoothie bowl or don't really know what a smoothie bowl is, let me break it down for you.

Simply put, it's a smoothie which has been made with less liquid to maintain its thickness, then it's tipped into a favourite bowl or jar and topped with delicious treats. It's like the classic ice cream in a cup – cold, thick, colourful and crunchy but with the added bonus of super foods, fruits, vitamins and minerals.

Smoothie bowls make for an easy, fun way to squeeze more goodness into your daily life. These bowls of wholefood goodness will give you the perfect amount of energy and focus you need to get through the entire day.

With the silly season upon us and New Year nearly here too, all the latest juice and detox plans start to appear. Be wary of these quick fixes, or should we say 'quack' fixes. I suggest that you consume a variety of fresh wholefoods. Wholefoods are foods found in their natural whole state, unprocessed or unrefined.

When food is found as Mother Nature intended they provide our body with all the goodness and nutrients it needs to function at its peak level.

Plus, with a mostly plant-based diet, this will help heal and lower inflammation in the body and give you plenty of vitamins and minerals to nourish the body from the inside out. We really are a reflection of what's going on inside.

Adding in the occasional veggie juice is fine but remember when you juice fruits you not only strip them of their natural fibre (which studies show have many health and weight loss benefits), but you also create a spike in your blood sugar, sending insulin levels high - which may result in increased fat storage.

Smoothie bowls are a great alternative to juices and will provide you with so many delicious benefits.

Swap your straw for a spoon and let's get to making some smoothie bowls!

ITEMS YOU'LL NEED



A good quality high-speed blender



Frozen fruits



Gorgeous bowls



Preserving jars (for collecting super foods for toppings)



Spoons

TIPS

- Frozen fruits are best for adding thickness, creaminess and sweetness – frozen bananas are great as they do all three!
- If you don't have a high-speed blender, blend your greens first when making smoothies or bowls, as they break down better, then add in the rest of your ingredients.
- Buy organic where possible and scrub everything before blending.
- If you don't have time to get creative every time, just create an easy base you love and then top it with different flavours.

The combinations are endless and limited only to your imagination. the following are some of my favourite smoothie bowl recipes - but feel free to get creative and make up your own recipes too!



KIWI MANGO DREAMS

This smoothie will boost your immune system thanks to the kiwi's high vitamin C content. The added mango is loaded with vitamins A, C and E, making it the queen of antioxidants and with added matcha powder, it's just bursting with health and wellbeing benefits!

Ingredients:

FOR THE BASE

- 1 handful baby spinach
- 1 frozen banana
- ¼ cup of mango pieces
- 1 whole kiwi fruit
- ½ tsp of matcha powder
- Liquid of choice (coconut water or almond milk)
- Ice if needed

FOR THE TOPPING

- Oaty muesli mix
- 5 apricots
- ½ cup oats
- ½ coconut
- 5 fresh dates
- 1 kiwi fruit

1. Combine all the ingredients, except the banana and mango, and blend well until smooth, adding the desired amount of liquid as you go. Add the frozen banana and mango, and ice if needed. The mixture should be thick like a soft-serve ice cream – add more ice if needed.
2. For the topping, blend the dates and apricots into sticky dough then add the rest of the ingredients and blend them together. Store in small glass jar in fridge
3. To serve, pour the smoothie mixture into a bowl of choice and top with chopped kiwi and shredded homemade oat mix.



COCONUT BERRY CRÈME

Coconut, cashews and banana combine together to create a creamy dairy-free base for this bowl. Figs are naturally high in fibre and prebiotics so they will help you to stay fuller for longer while helping heal your gut. Cashews contain the amino acid tryptophan, which helps to make the happy hormone serotonin.

TIP

You can soak the cashews overnight if you like or remove them for a nut-free alternative.

Ingredients:

FOR THE BASE

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup frozen raspberries
- ½ cup strawberries
- 2 tbsp desiccated coconut
- Handful of cashews
- Coconut water
- Liquid of choice
- Ice as needed

FOR THE TOPPING

- Fresh figs
- Fresh berries

1. Combine all ingredients, except the banana, and blend well until smooth, adding the desired amount of liquid as you go. Lastly add the frozen banana and ice. The mixture should be thick like a soft serve ice cream – add more ice if needed.
2. To serve, pour mixture into a bowl and garnish with figs and berries.





EARTHY GREEN GODDESS

Leafy greens are high in minerals and are very alkalising for the body. The squeeze of lime and refreshing cucumber compliment the greens just perfectly. Cucumbers are also very cleansing and are amazing for skin health. For a quick protein boost, use almond milk for your liquid.

Ingredients:

FOR THE BASE

- 2 handfuls baby spinach
- 1 small handful kale
- 1 frozen banana
- ¼ avocado
- ½ green apple
- ½ cucumber
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp flaxseed
- ½ cup frozen blueberries
- Squeeze of Lime
- Almond milk / Liquid of choice

FOR THE TOPPING

- Vegan gluten-free mix (store bought)
- Coconut flakes
- Chia seeds
- Banana slices
- Flaxseeds/linseeds

1. Combine baby spinach, kale, apple, cucumber, lime, liquid, flaxseed and cinnamon, and blend well until smooth. Add the desired amount of liquid as you go. Then add frozen banana, avocado and berries. The mixture should be thick like a soft-serve ice cream – add more ice if needed.
2. To serve, pour mixture into a bowl and sprinkle vegan gluten-free mix, seeds and coconut flakes on top along with the banana slices.





BEET POWERHOUSE

The sweetness of the berries in this bowl compliments the earthy flavour of the beets just nicely. Beetroots can be super for liver cleansing and a great vegetarian source of iron. Leafy greens are known for their alkalising properties, while berries are jam-packed full of antioxidants. Add in the potassium from the banana and you have a nice bowl of health and vitality!

Ingredients:

FOR THE BASE

- 1 handful of baby spinach
- 1 frozen banana
- 1 small beetroot
- 1 pack of acai or 1 cup of strawberries
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 1-2 fresh dates (more for sweetness)

FOR THE TOPPING

- Chia
- Buckwheat groats
- Seed mix (pepitas, sunflower seeds, sliced almonds)
- 1 kiwi sliced (keep skin on if organic)

1. Combine all ingredients, except the banana, and blend well until smooth, adding the desired amount of liquid as you go. Then add the frozen banana and ice if needed. Blend until the mixture is thick like a soft-serve ice cream.
2. To serve, pour mixture into a bowl and garnish with chia, buckwheat groats, seeds and kiwi.





PAPAYA AND PEACH WITH CHEWYNOLA

This smoothie bowl has summer written all over it and it's full of nourishing goodness.

Luscious peaches are fibrous, full of potassium and beta carotene.

Papaya contains an enzyme that helps digest proteins and is rich in vitamin C.

Vanilla is known to help calm and relax the nervous system.

Ingredients

FOR THE BASE

- 1 frozen banana
- ½ cup of papaya
- 1 large peach
- ½ cup mango
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 1-2 fresh dates
- Coconut milk

FOR THE TOPPING

- Chewynola
- 8 fresh dates
- ½ cup oats or quinoa flakes
- ½ cup of shredded coconut (unsweetened)
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tbsp sweetener of choice (maple, coconut or malt syrup)
- Chunky coconut flakes

1. Combine all the ingredients and blend until smooth, adding the desired amount of liquid as you go.
2. For the chewynola, blend dates first into a sticky dough then add the rest of the ingredients until everything is blended together. Pulse for a more chunky style. Store in glass jar in fridge.
3. To serve, pour mixture into bowl and garnish with chewynola and coconut flakes.



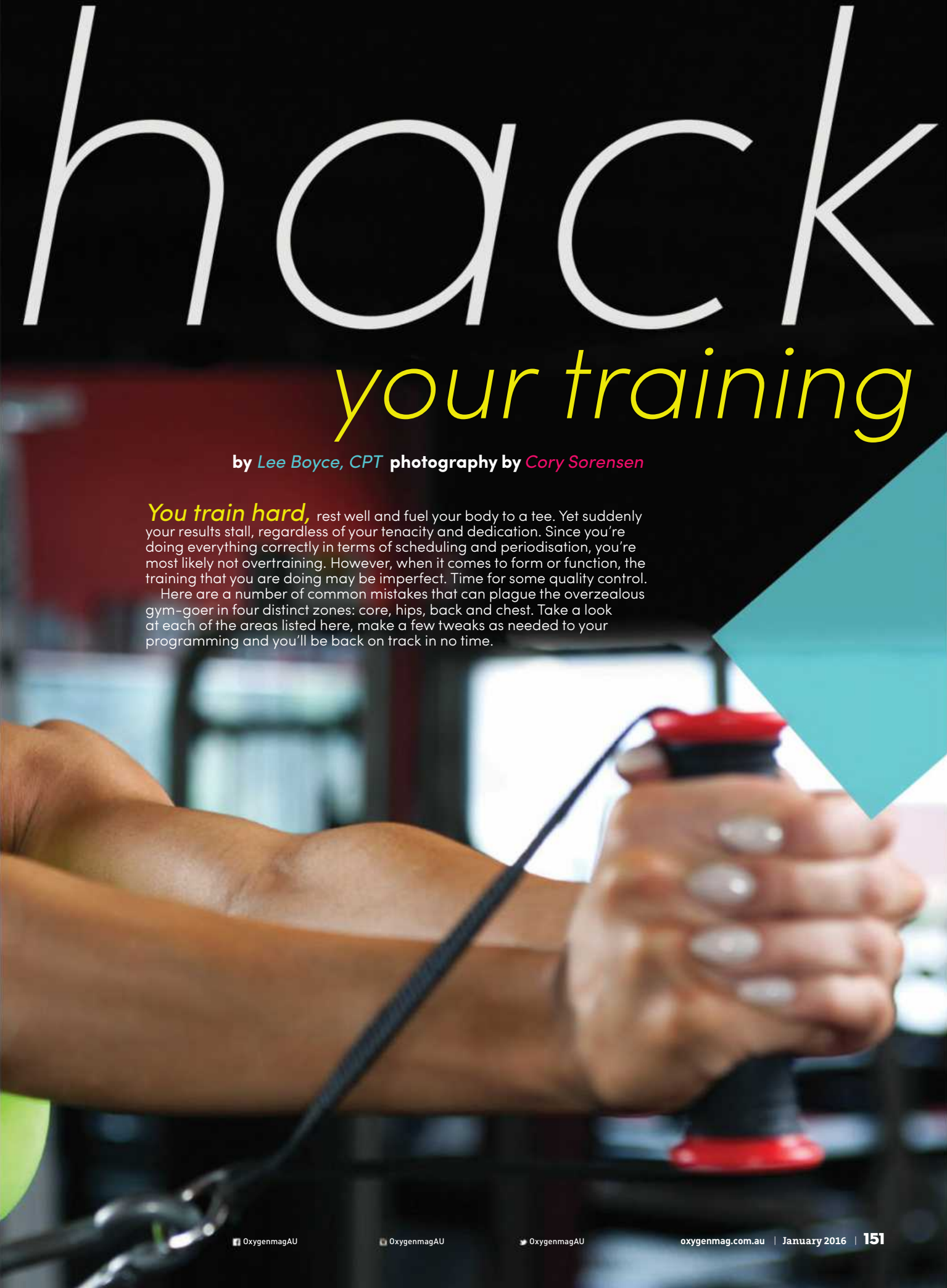
Sometimes a few simple tweaks to form and function are all you need to get your body — and your results — back on the fast track.

hack your training

by *Lee Boyce, CPT* **photography by** *Cory Sorensen*

You train hard, rest well and fuel your body to a tee. Yet suddenly your results stall, regardless of your tenacity and dedication. Since you're doing everything correctly in terms of scheduling and periodisation, you're most likely not overtraining. However, when it comes to form or function, the training that you are doing may be imperfect. Time for some quality control.

Here are a number of common mistakes that can plague the overzealous gym-goer in four distinct zones: core, hips, back and chest. Take a look at each of the areas listed here, make a few tweaks as needed to your programming and you'll be back on track in no time.



core

PROBLEM: You're overworking your trunk in flexion, logging hundreds of crunches per week. This approach can promote poor posture and increase the damaging forces on your lower back. For example, a typical slow-speed sit-up can impose up to 330 kilos of compression on the spine, according to Stuart McGill, Ph.D. To put that in perspective: It only takes 225 kilos of force to completely blow out your knee.

SOLUTION: Incorporate compound moves that include your hips, lower back and glutes, as well as your abs, to train your core as a single unit and create a well-rounded physique inside and out.

[EXERCISE RX]

PLATE TRANSFER PLANK

Muscles worked: rectus abdominis, obliques, quadratus lumborum, erector spinae, shoulders, glutes and chest
Why it works: This move trains the core to resist rotational forces and stabilise your spine.
Set-up: Stack five small plates (1 or 2 kilos) in a pile on the floor, then get into a plank on your elbows with the plate pile just outside your right elbow.
Move: Hold your plank as you reach across your body with your left hand and, one by one, bring the plates over to the left side, stacking them one on top of the other. Next, repeat the process with the right hand, stacking them from left to right, to complete one rep. Do four sets of three reps, resting one minute between sets.





TIP: **Don't twist or rotate your hips as you move the plates from one side to the other; your body should look like a flat table the entire time. If you're having trouble balancing, spread your feet a little wider apart.**

"A typical slow-speed sit-up can impose up to 330 kilos of compression on the spine." — STUART McGILL, PH.D.

[EXERCISE RX]

PALOFF PRESS

Muscles worked: rectus abdominis, obliques, quadratus lumborum, anterior delts, chest
Why it works: Your core has to resist the draw of the cable as it pulls you to one side, again training in anti-rotation and stabilising your spine and lower back.
Set-up: Set a cable pulley at waist level, using a single handle. Stand sideways to the pulley and hold the handle in front of your belly button with both hands, hips and shoulders square, elbows bent and tucked into your sides. Take a step forward to create some tension on the cable.
Move: Slowly press the handle straight out, moving directly forward and resisting the sideways pull of the cable. Once you reach full extension, reverse the move and slowly return to the start. Do three sets of 12 to 15 reps on each side. Rest 45 to 60 seconds per set.

TIP: **It doesn't take much weight for this exercise to be effective. If you feel it excessively in your arms and shoulders, or if your hips twist to the side, chances are the weight is too heavy.**



[EXERCISE RX]
BARBELL BENCH HIP THRUST
Muscles worked: glutes, hamstrings, erector spinae
Why it works: Placing the bar across your hips directly hits the glutes, while the upward thrust helps stretch the hip flexors.
Set-up: Sit with your upper back against the broad side of a bench and place a barbell across your hips. Place your feet a bit more than hip-width apart with your knees bent, and hold the barbell with your hands on either side of your hips.
Move: Press your upper back into the bench and drive through your heels to lift your hips upward to come in line with your knees and shoulders, like a table. Squeeze your glutes at the top, then slowly lower to the start. Do three sets of 10 to 15 reps, resting 45 to 60 seconds between sets.



TIP: **Before each rep, tuck your pelvis underneath first, then raise your hips. This prevents your lower back from arching and saves your spine from strain.**



hips

PROBLEM: Doing a lot of squats? If so, you may be overloading your quads and lower back and your hips may be stiff and inflexible, affecting posterior chain mobility and tilting your pelvis anteriorly or toward the front. And while squats are a must-do move for everyone, there is such a thing as squatting too much, especially if your mechanics are imperfect to begin with.

SOLUTION: Add glute-dominant exercises to your program to reduce stress on your lower back and help correct pelvic posture, alleviating tightness by tilting it posteriorly. In addition, use split-stance exercises (in which one leg is forward and the other is back) to actively stretch the hip flexors.

While squats are a must-do move for everyone, there is such a thing as squatting too much.



TIP: **If your hips are tight, descend just until you feel a pull, then hold at that point for two counts before rising to the start. With each rep, try to go a little lower.**

[EXERCISE RX]
REAR LEG ELEVATED SPLIT SQUAT
Muscles worked: quadriceps, glutes, hamstrings
Why it works: Splitting your stance and holding dumbbells at your sides can significantly lower the amount of spinal compression while encouraging greater gluteal activity.
Set-up: Hold a pair of dumbbells at your sides and stand in front of a flat bench. Extend one leg behind you and place your foot, laces down, on top of the bench.
Move: Bend both knees and lower yourself until your front leg makes a 90-degree angle. Keep your torso upright and your shoulders back — avoid leaning forward as you fatigue. Extend your legs to return to the start. Do all reps on one side before switching. Do three sets of eight to 10 reps per side. Rest one minute between sets.

MODEL: SOFIA RUUSILA • HAIR AND MAKEUP: NANCY JAMBAZIAN • LOCATION: DAVE FISHER'S POWERHOUSE GYM, TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA



[EXERCISE RX]
TECHNIQUE: "SET YOUR SHOULDERS"
Sit in a pulldown machine and take a wide overhand grip on the bar. Allow your arms to fully extend by relaxing your shoulders and back. Now, pull just your shoulder blades — not the bar or your elbows — downward and inward along your back while keeping your neck long. Pretend you're squeezing a pencil between your shoulder blades as you lift your clavicle upward. This position should be the starting point for every rep of every back move you do in order to fully engage the back muscles and prevent overuse of your arms. Practise this until it becomes automatic.

Using your arms too much limits the amount of back muscle tissue you train.



[EXERCISE RX]
TRY IT: BAND-RESISTED ROW
Muscles worked: rhomboids, rear delts, trapezius, rotator cuffs, latissimus dorsi
Why it works: The tension changes as the band stretches and contracts, requiring strong muscular contractions and sharp mental focus.
Set-up: Wrap a light or medium weight resistance band around an immobile object at chest level. Hold it with both hands and step back until there's ample tension. Assume a half-squat position, facing the anchor with your arms outstretched at chest level, back straight. Now "set your shoulders."
Move: Pull the band into your chest, driving your elbows rearward (not out to the sides) and keeping your chest lifted. Pause at the peak contraction, then squeeze your back muscles hard. Slowly return to the start. Do four sets of 15 reps. Rest 45 to 60 seconds between sets.



TIP: **Avoid leaning back. Stabilise your core, assume a powerful stance and perform the reps in a controlled manner.**

back

PROBLEM: Though back exercises look simple, they're among the most commonly botched moves in the gym, and if your coordination is off, your arms will initiate the move and take it over while your back has a snooze. Using your arms too much limits the amount of back muscle tissue you train.

SOLUTION: Practise the "set your shoulders" technique to prepare yourself for perfect form. Once in the "set" position, you're all but guaranteed to give your back a rude awakening while saving your shoulders and elbows from strain.

chest

PROBLEM: Your chest is not responding well, considering the amount of training you're delivering to it. It may be the result of faulty training angles. This is a very common problem, wherein you may be lifting with your chest collapsed, your shoulders protracted and your back flat. Ultimately, you're pressing with your shoulders rather than your chest. All these incorrect angles easily translate to a thrashing of your front delts and a vacation for your pecs.

SOLUTION: Properly target your pecs and save your shoulders by following the "better your bench" tips below. Altering your benching will cause the bar to travel a shorter distance, effectively targeting the chest and sidelining your shoulders.



TIP: **Brace your feet on the floor during this move and drive through them on each rep to increase body tension and improve power.**

[EXERCISE RX]

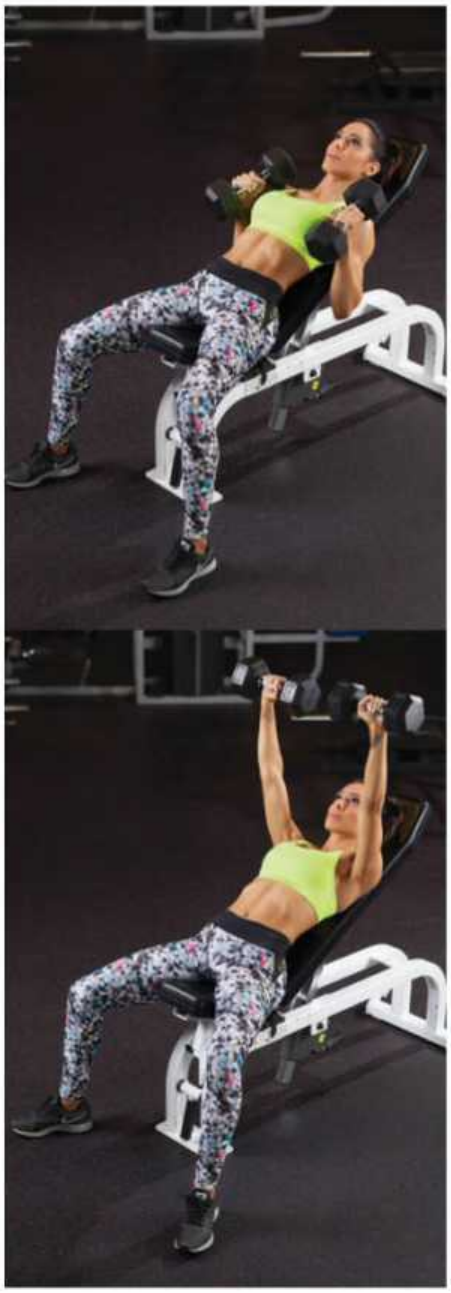
TECHNIQUE: "BETTER YOUR BENCH"

Lie on a bench with your feet flat on the floor. Hold a light barbell straight up over your chest, arms shoulder width, then pull your shoulder blades down and toward each other, just like you did with the "set your shoulders" exercise. Lift your rib cage and allow your back to arch just high enough so you could fit your forearm underneath. This is the position you should maintain throughout the move to best target your chest and preserve the integrity of your shoulders.

[EXERCISE RX]

TRY IT: DUMBBELL INCLINE BENCH PRESS

Muscles worked: pecs, anterior delts, triceps
Why it works: Using dumbbells allows for more play at the elbows, making it possible to find the right arm angle to reduce pressure on your shoulders.
Set-up: Set an incline bench to 45 degrees and hold a set of dumbbells at your shoulders, palms facing inward. Assume the "better your bench" position.
Move: Press the dumbbells straight up over your upper chest, turning your wrists as you extend so that at the top your palms are facing forward. Slowly lower to the start with your elbows tucked in close.



You may be lifting with your chest collapsed, your shoulders protracted and your back flat.

From Fearful to Fierce

FACING MULTIPLE PERSONAL ISSUES AND COMBATING MEDICATION DEPENDENCY THROUGH FITNESS, JUSTINE WHITCHURCH REGAINED HER INTERNAL POWER AND DISCOVERED HER SELF-BELIEF.

BY **KIRSTIN CUTHBERT** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DALLAS OLSEN**



Before



After

FAST FACTS
Name: Justine Whitchurch
Location: Gold Coast, QLD
Occupation: Personal trainer/owner of TLF (The Life Factory)
Age: 42
Height: 164cm
Weight: 51-55kg

IN 2011 AT THE AGE OF 38, JUSTINE WHITCHURCH HIT ROCK BOTTOM. FACED WITH A VARIETY OF PERSONAL CHALLENGES SUCH AS HER MARRIAGE ENDING, HER DAUGHTER'S DIAGNOSIS WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES, CUSTODY ISSUES, LOSS OF FINANCIAL SECURITY AND AN EXTREMELY BATTERED SENSE OF SELF-WORTH, JUSTINE DIDN'T THINK SHE COULD GO ON. With clinical depression, agoraphobia and dependent on medications, her weight plummeted to 47kg and she faced serious health issues. However, when professionals suggested she tried to exercise, she joined a gym and didn't look back. Each challenge she faced she now saw as an opportunity to grow physically and mentally, and slowly but surely she began to love life again.

Before Justine started training she was "sad, depressed and anxious" - she was living in a state of constant fear and her health deteriorated.

"I was told by my specialists that if I continued to go down the path I was on, my days were numbered. My family no longer recognised me, my children were fearful I would not recover and my world was falling apart," she says.

At the beginning of 2012, in a bid to seek assistance from her family, Justine moved to the Gold Coast with her new husband and two children.

"It was a long, slow process of recovery and quite frankly, in the beginning, definitely not a conscious one. I received some intense counselling, came off all prescription medications and stopped self-medicating," she says.

"I came to the conclusion that the only way I was going to be able to survive this was to replace my unhealthy habits with healthy ones."

She was faced with a choice, to continue as she was going or to make a change. Her specialists suggested exercise, so she joined the gym.

"When my life hung in the balance, my choice was to 'live' and I just started to exercise. This is where I struck gold. I had not intended for it to become such an integral part of my recovery," she says.

Justine was introduced to a personal trainer who changed the way she challenged life as a whole.

"Having made unsavoury choices himself in his life previously, he reinforced the ideal that everybody deserves a second chance and that I was capable of much more than I believed, if I gave myself a chance," she says.

The more she worked out, the stronger she became and slowly she began to find strength and believe in herself.

"With every challenge I conquered physically, I also grew in strength mentally. I quickly learnt the significant correlation between good physical health and strong mental health," she says.

"My training intensified, my confidence grew and with the ongoing support of my family and like-minded new friends, suddenly this lifestyle was something I craved."

"The discipline and structure of a fit and healthy lifestyle can translate to every part of my life."

Justine began to apply the strategies and skills she learned in the gym to other areas of her life and found that her coping mechanisms to deal with everyday issues also increased.

"The discipline and structure of a fit and healthy lifestyle can translate to every part of my life. I am more organised, better equipped and stronger psychologically to handle the everyday challenges of life," she says.

Having started out with no self-belief, she feels the power of another's belief was what she needed.

"I learnt the importance of having somebody believe in you, because sometimes you need someone else to believe in you before you can believe in yourself," she says.



One week after her 40th birthday, she commenced her personal training qualification and decided it was time to pay it forward. She now has her own business with the motto is "Freedom thru Fitness."

"I truly believe that is the case. You can find freedom through fitness, no matter what it is that you are feeling overwhelmed or trapped by," she says.

At 42 now, Justine feels she has finally found purpose and meaning in her life as she has the opportunity to teach others that the impossible is possible.

"I have the pleasure of watching people grow and develop not only physically, but mentally and seeing how this positively affects every other part of their life is amazing," she says.

"Being physically fit gives you the ability to face life's challenges from a healthier perspective. Creating habits that work 'for you' instead of 'against you' takes commitment and support and I thrive on being able to lead by example and show others how to do this."

Motivated by the desire to never feel like she did prior to getting well, she chooses to better herself each and every day.

"The fear of being that out of control and so lost propels me every day to continue on this journey to become stronger than ever," she says.

Justine says today her marriage has never been stronger, her children have blossomed and she cannot remember ever being happier.

"I feel alive, strong, worthy, confident and capable. Today I have my power back," she says.

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Katey **Field**

MELBOURNE, VIC

OCCUPATION:
PERSONAL TRAINER
AGE: **28**
WEIGHT: **51KG**
HEIGHT: **158CM**

WORKOUT INSPIRATION? I have always done some form of training - whether that is laps in a pool or running the streets around my house. But it wasn't until about three years ago that I started training seriously in the gym for bikini fitness competitions.

ROLE MODEL? My friends are my role models. I am lucky enough to have some amazing, talented friends who compete at elite levels. They inspire me and help motivate me to push myself and aim high with my dreams and goals. I have other friends who motivate me too; the one with the everyday battles of juggling their children, work and still aiming for a happy and healthy lifestyle.

WEIGHTS OR CARDIO? I love my cardio as I find it really stress-relieving and a great way to escape and just be at one with myself. But I also love the feeling of a good weights workout and the way that lifting weights makes my body look and feel.

FAVOURITE WAY TO RELAX? I'm a beach bum and love summer, so I relax down on the sand or by listening to music on the sun lounge out in the backyard. Sometimes I'll get a coffee or enjoy an occasional wine with friends.



Stephanie **Bernard**

SYDNEY, NSW

OCCUPATION:
GROUP FITNESS INSTRUCTOR
AGE: **28**
HEIGHT: **169CM**
WEIGHT: **62KG**

TRAINING MOTIVATION? I always worked out, however my nutrition could have been better. I grew up eating my amazing mother's Mauritian food, which always included rice for lunch and dinner. It was delicious but I could eat so much. I also worked at KFC from the age of 14 and from 18-23 there wasn't a weekend I wasn't out dancing and drinking. Then at 25, in a relationship and not as active as I used to be, I reached 80kg. In 2012 my New Year's resolution was to lose weight so I changed my eating and lost 10kg. Six months later my twin sister discovered a fitness competition and insisted I join her in entering. Nine weeks later, we were on stage and I'd lost another 10kg. After that day, our lives changed forever!

MOST REWARDING ASPECT? I love teaching and motivating others, being able to see them change, grow and blossom; there's no feeling like it. My year with the INBA Natural Bodybuilding Federation in 2014 was also very rewarding, standing on stage in first place, knowing I succeeded with no shortcuts.

ADVICE FOR WOMEN? Always follow your gut feeling, slowly build yourself up to your goal, don't rush or deprive yourself. Follow a smart plan, and stick to it right until the end – slight amendments are fine but don't let anyone side track you or turn you off your goals. There's a legitimate reason you started, so keep going. Even when you lack that motivation, just do it anyway, you'll be so proud of yourself after!



Manal **Garcia**

SYDNEY, NSW

OCCUPATION:
PERSONAL TRAINER
AGE: **43**
HEIGHT: **168CM**
WEIGHT: **57KG**

WORKOUT INSPIRATION? I casually trained and ran before having children but then threw myself into the gym and running after my second child was born as some 'time out' for me. I loved the fit life so much that I studied to be a PT at night whilst working three days a week in marketing and having very young babies. My goal was to start my own PT outdoor business. By the time my youngest was two years old (he's almost 13 now), I accomplished my goal and was also regularly competing with my running.

ROLE MODEL? My clients are my role models. They get up early to meet me in the dead of winter and push themselves to achieve their goals. I feel inspired to continually push myself to also inspire them.

BEST FITNESS TIP? Set the alarm, get up and just do it before you have time to talk yourself out of it. Also, keep a training diary. It's vital! Record every workout so that you are accountable to yourself. At the end of the day, you make your own decisions and look or feel a certain way because of those decisions. Don't blame weather, workload etc., get up early and get it done.

HOW DO YOU FIND BALANCE? It's difficult and it changes as the kids get older. There's always a juggle and a sacrifice. I'm just lucky that hubby is also passionate about fitness so we know the importance of giving each other time. Sleep is what's sacrificed the most as I get up at 'stupid o'clock' to fit it all in some days.

KATEY PHOTO CREDIT CHARLIE SURIANO | STEPHANIE PHOTO CREDIT CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHY | MANAL PHOTO CREDIT LEE LUCAS PHOTOGRAHY



Janna **Breslin**

SAN DIEGO, USA

OCCUPATION: **FITNESS & SWIMWEAR MODEL**

AGE: **25**

HEIGHT: **173CM**

WEIGHT: **59KG**

LIFE BEFORE TRAINING? Before training, I was a typical cardio-only type of girl, munching on celery throughout the day in between low-calorie meals, only to find myself gorging on carb-loaded foods and dessert at night. At that time I was also a varsity pole vaulter and ran cross country. At university, I went to the gym only to do sit ups and run, I never touched a weight until mid 2013. I ate what I thought was healthy but my knowledge of nutrition was definitely not as deep as it is now!

HOW DIFFERENT DO YOU FEEL NOW? I do not deprive myself and I feed myself for health first, image second – which was the opposite before. Whenever I need to lean out for shoots or events I just clean up my diet a little more, which is not far off from what I already eat. I feel physically strong, empowered, lively, energetic and happy. I seem to always wake up ready to take on the day now!

NUMBER ONE THING YOU'VE LEARNED? It shouldn't be about your image or how nice your glutes are. Being healthy and having a strong body is created by providing it with the best quality food and pushing yourself every single day in the gym. You get out what you put in and that is true with many different areas in life!



Rachel **Dillon**

TOWNSVILLE, QLD

OCCUPATION: **PERSONAL TRAINER**

AGE: **21**

HEIGHT: **166CM**

WEIGHT: **56KG**

WORKOUT INSPIRATION? I was always very active growing up. It wasn't until after I had finished school that I began to lift weights and start functional training and HIIT. My partner took me to train with him and showed me some different styles that I fell in love with and got me away from being your typical 'cardio fanatic'.

FAVOURITE CHEAT FOOD? Every Friday night my partner and I go and get nachos and waffles before we train legs on Saturday morning. That is our reward after being so strict during the week. We don't really drink so that is us getting 'wild'!

ADVICE FOR GYM NEWBIES? Don't be afraid to ask other people for advice, and don't be embarrassed! Everyone starts somewhere and everyone has to learn one way or another. It is important to do exercises correctly to prevent injuries so if you are unsure, ask a friend or someone you know who has been training for a while to take you for a session if you don't want to get a personal trainer.

BEST FITNESS TIP? The better your mindset, the more committed you will be to achieving your goals and the less likely you are to give up when things feel tough! You CAN achieve anything you put your mind to! Do something every day to get one step closer to your goal. Remember, knowledge is nothing without action. Starting is always the hardest part, but I promise you it will be worth it though.



Caterina **Ruberto**

SYDNEY, NSW

OCCUPATION: **PERSONAL TRAINER**

AGE: **24**

HEIGHT: **167CM**

WEIGHT: **57KG**

WORKOUT INSPIRATION? I have always been active and healthy and was much more into my sports at school than studies. But since moving to Sydney I have been consistently working out and training in the gym. I was simply inspired by the way it made me feel and look. Now you can't get me out of a gym!

WHAT HAVE YOU OVERCOME? Growing up in a small country town in regional NSW, I never dreamed I could have accomplished what I have - doing something I love and have such a passion for. I never thought I would move seven hours away from family and friends and find myself stepping out of my comfort zone well and truly and walking onto a stage in a bikini to be judged on my physical appearance. I was self-conscious and shy all through my school years and never really had the confidence to stand out from the crowd, so to get on stage and compete was a massive step for me. To walk away with a win in my first comp blew my mind, to then continue my winning streak and really enjoy the whole process of competing and pushing myself to be better every time has been amazing.

BEST FITNESS TIP? Always believe in yourself and your capability to achieve your goals, no matter how unattainable people may say they are or they may sometimes seem to be. Keep pushing yourself to be better each day than the day before.

JANNA PHOTO CREDIT JAMES PATRICK | RACHEL PHOTO CREDIT SHANNON LAWRENCE PHOTOGRAPHY | CATERINA PHOTO CREDIT GARY PHILIPS

Spotlight

CHECK OUT THESE AMAZING GIRLS WHO STEPPED ON TO THE STAGE RECENTLY TO COMPETE!

If you'd like the chance to be featured in this spread, send in your high-res image and competition details to **editorial@oxygenmag.com.au**



Danika Farrugia

Event: INBA All Female Classic
Location: Melbourne, VIC
Date: June 2015
Categories and places: 4th in Bikini First Timers, 5th in Bikini under-21 and 5th in Bikini Novice.



Natasha Baker

Event: Australian Natural Bodz Asia Pacific International
Location: Gold Coast, QLD
Date: June 2015
Categories and places: 5th in Bikini Novice and 4th in Bikini Juniors



Lacey Blackman

Event: INBA Tropix North Queensland Championships
Location: Townsville, QLD
Date: September 2015
Categories and places: 1st in Bikini Open (tall)



Jade Herald

Event: INBA NSW State Championships
Location: Randwick, NSW
Date: September 2015
Categories and places: 1st in Bikini First Timers, 1st in Bikini Novice and 2nd in Bikini Open.



Danielle Mondo

Event: WBFF Gold Coast
Location: Gold Coast, QLD
Date: May 2015
Categories and places: 3rd in Fitness Model 35+



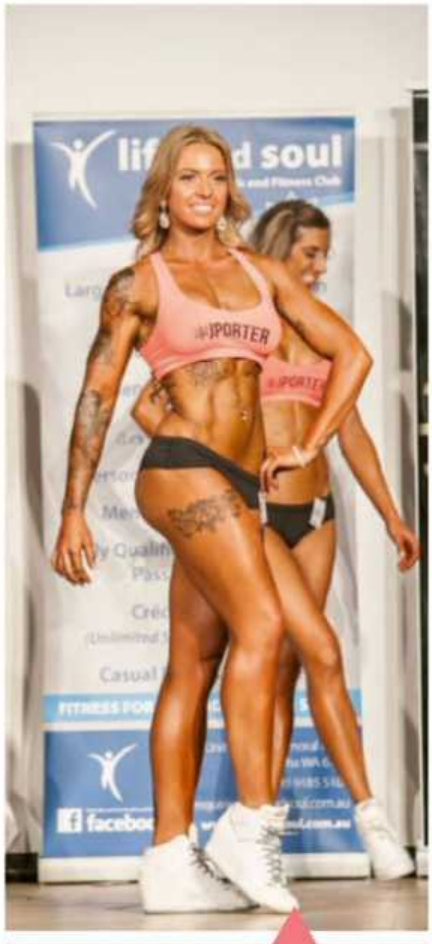
Bec Kuum

Event: INBA Brisbane Classic
Location: Brisbane, QLD
Date: September 2015
Categories and places: 4th in Fitness Model 30+



Kate Keown

Event: INBA Victorian State Championships
Location: Moonee Ponds, VIC
Date: September 2015
Categories and places: 1st in Fitness Model First Timers and 1st in Fitness Model Novice



Rhiannon Gibson

Event: INBA WA North West Titles
Location: Karratha, WA
Date: August 2015
Categories and places: 2nd in Fitness First Timers, 3rd in Fitness Novice and 2nd in Fitness Open (tall)



Sharon Horner

Event: INBA South Coast Classic
Location: Bulli, NSW
Date: September 2015
Categories and places: 3rd in Figure Novice, 3rd in Short Figure Masters 40+ and 3rd in Women's Open



Amelia Bros

Event: ANB Central Coast Natural Physique Championships
Date: September 2015
Location: Erina, NSW
Category: Fitness Model Under 30



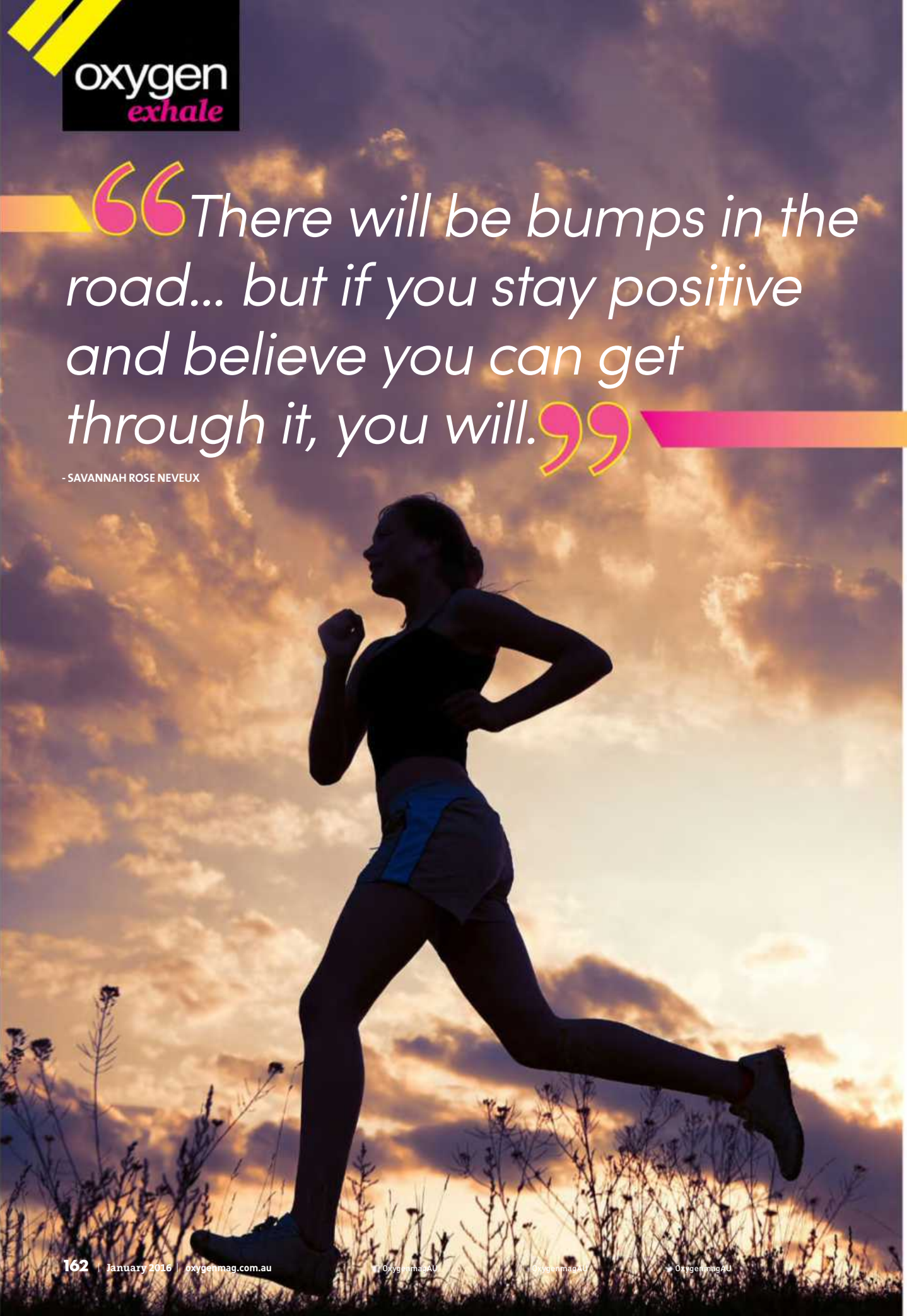
Jillian Riddle

Event: INBA Perth Classic
Location: Perth, WA
Date: May, 2015
Categories and places: 5th in Bikini Mumma and first call out for Bikini 30+



Micayla Dixon

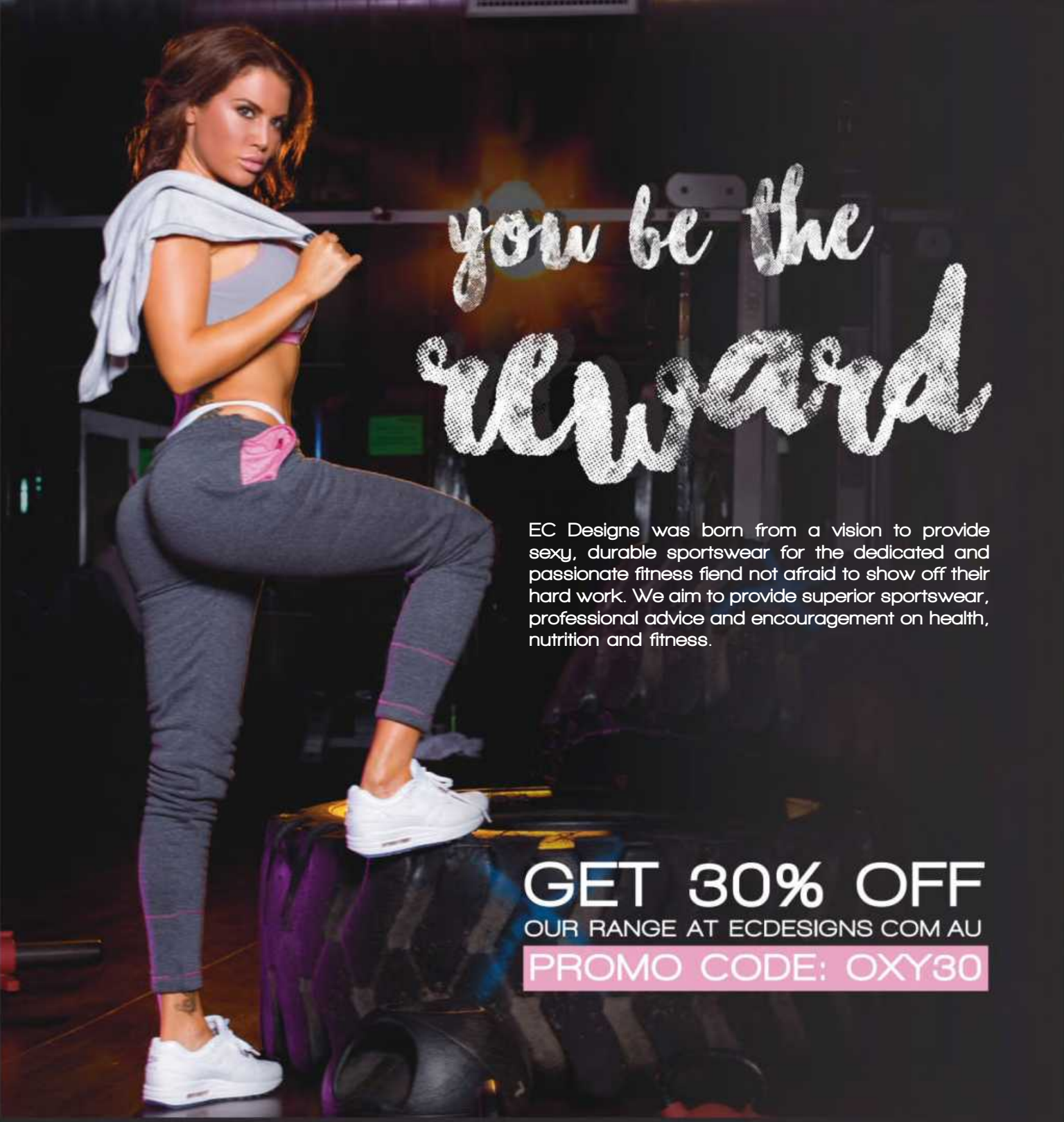
Event: INBA QLD State Championships
Location: Chandler, QLD
Date: September 2015
Categories and places: 1st in One Piece Ms Swimsuit, 2nd in Under 21 Ms Bikini Model, 1st in Ms Bikini Model Novice, 1st in Ms Bikini Model Open and overall INBA Ms Bikini Model QLD 2015



"There will be bumps in the road... but if you stay positive and believe you can get through it, you will."

- SAVANNAH ROSE NEVEUX

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